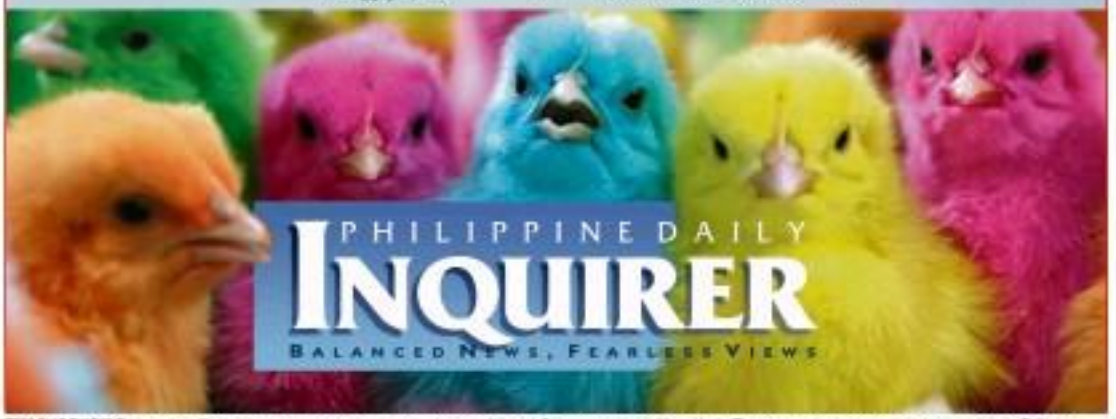
Thursday, July 30, 2009 ** 6 sections / Vol. 34 / No. 232 P18



TRES-CHIC CHICKS Chicks made up like their human counterparts in eye-candy colors are sold for only P4 in some markets in Metro Manila. They are a novelty that can probably be seen only in the Philippines.

Protests dog GMA US trip

GMA critics write letter to Obama

By TJ Burgonio

WHEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO meets with US President Barack Obama at the White House on Thursday—Friday in Manila—her opponents back home will be hoping that it will result in a change they can believe in.

Ms Arroyo left for Washington on Wednesday afternoon for her much-sought meeting with the newly elected US president amid a call by a civil society group on Obama to tell her that she should comply with democratic principles and adhere to human rights.

In an open letter to Obama that was published yesterday in national newspapers as paid ads, the group, led by former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and ex-Senate President Jovito Salonga, said that upon Obama's assumption of the US presidency, Filipinos "rejoiced at the audacious hope" that he had inspired.

PROTESTS A14

Gloria makes 20th visit to 2nd district, Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas and Charlene Cayabyab in Central Luzon and Lolit B. Solaverria in Manila

STA. RITA, PAMPANGA—A FEW HOURS before leaving for Washington to meet with US President Barack Obama, President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Pampanga.

GLORIA A14

GOODBYE...AGAIN President Arroyo with husband Mike Arroyo is all to meet with US President Obama for the first time since he assumed office last January. Ms Arroyo, who has attempted twice before to arrange a greet-meet encounter with the first black American president, is the first Asian leader invited to visit with Obama. In her absence, she designates Vice President Noli de Castro as caretaker.

THE OBAMAS PHOTO on the campaign trail wins first prize in People in the News Stories category of the World Press Photo Exhibition at the Podium Aug. 1–8, The Block SM City North-EDSA, Aug. 9–14 and at SM Mall of Asia, Aug. 15–23. (Story on Page A14)

Cory stable; more healing Masses, accolades for icon

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE CONDITION OF FORMER PRESIDENT Corazon Aquino has improved but her son, Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, conceded that only God knew how long she would remain stable.

The senator said his mother's blood pressure was "a lot better than previous," and that he assisted yesterday that she was okay because his sisters had not called him or sent a text message.

"Will she be stable for a very long time? I think only God will know," he told reporters at the Senate.

"I would like to emphasize that this is

CORY CONDITION A6

How Cory made her graceful exit

By Franklin M. Drilon

DURING THE LAST YEAR OF CORY Aquino's presidency, people close to her floated the possibility of extending her term. They argued that since she came to power as a "revolutionary government," she was, therefore, eligible to run for another six-year term.

COMMENTARY

Whenever the idea was mentioned in her presence, however, Cory would simply look out of the window to the right of her desk, ignoring the suggestion.

As her last executive secretary, I witnessed this scene several times, and it is this memory that comes to mind today as I contemplate the difference between that presidency and the present one.

HOW CORY A6

Melissa denies she's girl in 'NPA video'

By Lolit B. Solaverria and Nikko Dizon

THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN ACTIVIST who claimed to have been tortured by military agents denied yesterday that she was the young woman in the video presented by two party-list lawmakers as purported proof that she is a communist rebel.

Testifying at a hearing conducted by the House committee on human rights, Melissa Roxas wept as she narrated that during her six-day captivity in what seemed like a military camp, one of her abductors showed her pictures apparently taken from the video.

She wondered whether the source of the video was her abductors, and insisted that she was not a member of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

MELISSA A4

BUSINESS / B2
Meralco stock price breaks P300 barrier, recalls BW surge

NEWS / A3
Gov't, Moro rebs agree to resume peace talks

ONE HEART, 2 HEADS Doctors are trying to save a baby girl born with two heads. (Story on Page A18)

LIFESTYLE / C1
Behind every picture-perfect plate is a food stylist; Dolores Custer proved it

'Comelec loses control over 2010 polls to contractors'

By Norman Bordadora and Marlon Ramos

THE SUPREME COURT WAS urged yesterday to junk the contract to automate next year's elections amid fears that control over the balloting would be left entirely in the hands of private contractors.

Justices closely questioned Harry Roque, counsel for the Concerned Citizen's Movement (CCM), on his claim that "keys," or passwords, that would allow access to the computers would be left solely in the hands of

SC TOLD A6

GO FIGURE It's a one-piece swimsuit pretending to be two? Or is it pretending to be three? Onlookers at the press presentation of the 39 Mutya ng Pilipinas candidates at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel are trying to figure out while trying to suppress a gasp at the Rene Salud creation featuring flesh-baring cutouts.

Malacañang names 7 new National Artists

By TJ Burgonio

A PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER ON culture, a director famous for his "Genghis Khan" movie, a contemporary dancer and an internationally acclaimed painter.

They are this year's National Artists along with a Tagalog writer, an architect who designed the Coconut Palace and a prominent fashion designer.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the nomination of Cecile-Guidote Alvarez, Manuel Urbano (aka Manuel Conde), Magno Jose "Carlo" Caparas, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, Lazaro

MALACAÑANG A4

Erap starts shoot of comeback movie in bed with Ai-ai

By Fe Zamora

AFTER A 22-YEAR BREAK from the movies, former President Joseph Estrada returned to acting on Wednesday, shooting a love scene with comedienne Ai-ai de las Alas.

"Our first scene is a bed scene," Estrada said on Tuesday night, chuckling.

The first day of shooting will

STARS A14

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Cloudiness, p.m. Visayas and Mindanao: all-day rains; cloudy skies with occasional rains and thunderstorms in the rest of the country; light to moderate winds; 75 to 101 F (24 to 38 C); seas generally slight; cloudy skies with occasional rains.

Metro Manila		Isabela/Aurora	
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Ilocos	Cloudy with Rain
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rain
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rain
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Cotabato	Cloudy with Rain
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rain
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rain

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6/23
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MEGALOTTO 6/45
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Chiz: I'm not seeking GMA backing

By Michael Lim Ubac

IF HE DOES DECIDE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT IN 2010, Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero yesterday said he would be an opposition candidate and denied ever seeking the endorsement of President Macapagal-Arroyo for his candidacy.

"I have no sought, nor will I seek, the endorsement of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She have I confirmed anyone to do so," he said.

Let Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando or Vice President Noli de Castro, "or anyone else who might want her blessings, get that endorsement which they have been seeking from anyone, he will I race," said Escudero.

He was responding to a claim made by the President's eldest son, Pampanga Rep. Aral. Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, that the opposition senator was one of those who had sought Mr Arroyo's support in the 2010 elections.

In a phone interview, Escudero said he never dreamed of becoming the standard bearer of the administration coalition in 2010.

"I have said it before, I will never run with the administration. I'm not asking for it (endorsement). She can give it to those asking for it," he said.

Escudero explained that if he were indeed soliciting the backing of the Palace, it "defies logic" for the President's son to reveal it in the public.

Escudero, a member of the Nacionalist People's Coalition, said he had not even declared his candidacy yet.

"And if I do, I will seek only the endorsement of the Filipino people and will run as opposition simply because I have been consistently against and questioned the mandate of this administration from the very start," he said.

The senator today led a failed impeachment drive against Mr Arroyo when he was still a congressman.

Escudero pointed out that he had supported and was spokesperson of the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr in the 2004 presidential election.

He said he stood consistently against the administration on major public positions such as the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement, the expanded value-added tax and the Human Security Act.

The President's eldest son said opposition politicians who wanted to be President never join political parties in their youth) on his mother but were actually "back-channeling" through her allies to get concessions from her.

Mikey Arroyo refused to name names, but ABS-CBN's Teleradyo on the same day ran a recorder which reported him as saying that Escudero had made "feelers" (a request) for Mr Arroyo's support in 2010.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr called on the congressman to "identify these Trojan horses so we can punish them."

Another presidential aspirant, Sen. Mar Roxas said it was obvious that the President's son was not alluding to him.

What's taking ZTE report so long? Nene asks Dick

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG?

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. yesterday raised this question as he demanded an explanation from the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon on its failure to come up with a report on the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN)-ZTE controversy.

Pimentel said the report was long overdue and the public deserved to know the outcome of the lengthy probe undertaking by the joint investigating panel composed of the blue ribbon committee, Quad committee, the committee on trade and commerce and committee on national defense and security.

The Senate began the high-profile inquiry in Sept. 2007 with Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano as chair, but was briefly stalled when Malacañang entrenched, invoking executive privilege.

Before Cayetano could produce a report, the majority savaged the chairmanship from him following the Senate recess in November 2008 that installed Juan Ponce Enrile as Senate President.

Gordon neither conducted additional hearings nor has he come up with a committee report in the past eight months.

During the session break last month, Gordon said he would prevent the committee report after the July 27 convening of the third regular session of the 14th Congress, according to Pimentel.

Last week, the blue ribbon chair said he had already drafted a report, but added he had yet to get the silver senators' signatures.

The report would let the people know what was wrong with the transaction and who should be held liable, and put to rest any speculation that may place the blame on a rival light, said Pimentel.

Originally, the NBN project was conceived by Malacañang to be implemented through a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, with the cost to be fully shouldered by the private proponent.

Malacañang subsequently junked the BOT option in favor of a scheme that required the government to get a loan from the Export-Import Bank of China to finance the project.

The government eventually awarded the project to ZTE Corporation of China.

During the Senate public hearings, Pimentel said witnesses testified on the alleged overpricing and other terms and conditions of the contract that encompass in the government. They also claimed that billion went to the pockets of certain public officials to get the project approved.

Among the witnesses who testified were former National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) director-General Romulo Neri, former Philippine Scout-Ranger president Rolando "Bal" Lumidao and engineer Dante Mendoza, who served as consultant to a business group that bankrolled and designed the project proposal.

Neri had testified that he had told Malacañang about a P200-million bribe offer by then Commissioner on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. to secure the Neda's endorsement of the NBN-ZTE deal.

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Senate clears Villar, Gordon

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE ETHICS COMMITTEE YESterday cleared Sen. Manuel Villar of any liability in connection with a land deal in Sorsogon, Bicol.

The land deal was separate from the ethics case lodged against him in connection with the C-5 road extension project, which is still pending in the Senate Committee on Ethics.

The committee also exonerated Sen. Richard Gordon as it found legal and constitutional his private role as chair of the Philippine National Red Cross while serving as senator.

The dismissal of the two complaints was set to be adopted during a committee meeting yesterday, but Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the committee chair, and Senate majority leader Juan Miguel Zubiri showed up.

The other committee members—Senators Gordon, Manuel Roxas II, Loren Legarda and Jinggoy Estrada—were absent.

But Lacson told reporters that the proexoneration was only a matter of formality because six senators had already signed the decision dismissing the complaints.

Except for Lacson, Gordon, Zubiri, Legarda, Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Senate president pro-tempore Jinggoy Estrada signed the dismissal order.

In a phone interview, Lacson said the committee would still deliberate on the draft order in the next meeting. "But if no one will object, you're right, the adoption will simply be formality," he said.

"We're dismissing the backpedaling complaint because it was supposedly committed when he was still a congressman, not as a senator," said Lacson.

The committee had to dismiss the land-grabbing complaints against Villar on a technicality—the alleged crime occurred when he was still a congressman and was thus outside the jurisdiction of the Senate ethics committee.

"In the case versus Senator Villar, a draft order had been circulated last May 2009, and six members, including ex officio members, have already signed. It is up for adoption by the committee," said Lacson during the meeting.

MANILA WATER SERVICE
UPGRADE IN QUEZON CITY

Manila Water will undertake service improvement projects which will cause temporary water supply interruption in the following portions of Quezon City.

SCHEDULE:

10:00 PM, Thursday, July 30, 2009 up to 5:00 AM, Friday, July 31, 2009.

AFFECTED AREAS:

Barangay Payatan, Matalag, Malaka, Masakus, Maguey-ard, Magagnanat, Mauraanon, Maligaya, Maling, Malitao, Malakas and V Luna Rd.

Kamuning, South Triangle, Paligsahan, Legaspi Handa, Obrero, Sacred Heart, Sct. Lazaro, Sct. Castor, Sct. Ojeda, Dr. A. Rosas Ave., Maralison St., Tomas Morato St., P. Tuazon, Sct. Tobias, Sct. Santiago, Sct. Reyes, South A, South AA, Dr. Garcia, Quezon Ave. and Roxas District.

Manila Water Company is advising all residents of the said areas to store enough water to supply their needs during this interruption period.

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These service improvement projects are necessary to ensure safe and reliable water supply for our East Zone customers.

For updates, please call our Customer Care Hotline 1627.

Gov't, Moro rebs agree to resume formal talks

THE GOVERNMENT AND MORO REBELS agreed yesterday to resume formal talks next week to try to end 40 years of conflict in the South, officials said.

The government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) held a two-day informal meeting in Kuala Lumpur which ended with the agreement to resume talks ahead of President Macapagal-Arroyo's scheduled meeting with US President Barack Obama at the White House on Thursday.

"The meeting ended on a high note with both panels expressing optimism to continue to restore trust and confidence to addressing major issues in order to pave the way for the early resumption of the stalled peace negotiations," a joint statement said.

Zamalia Silongan, spokesperson for the government's peace panel, said the two sides agreed on a mechanism to help hundreds of thousands of displaced people in Mindanao to return to their homes and farms, hoping to empty shelter areas before the start of Ramadan, Islam's holy month, in late August.

"While we are happy that the talks are back on track, the challenge is bring a durable peace in Mindanao remains," he said.

Last week, both the government and MILF announced unilateral truces, ending nearly 12 months of violence that has killed 800 people and displaced almost 750,000 in six southern towns on Mindanao. Reuters

'GMA just wants more names'

By Christine F. Figueroa

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S asking for an expanded list of nominees for Supreme Court justice from the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) did not mean that she favored any particular candidates and wanted that name added to the list, said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

All it meant was that the President, who will appoint two new Supreme Court magistrates based on the JBC's recommendations, did not want her choices to be limited to the six names on the list, Ermita said.

"The President just wants more names submitted so she can have a better choice," he said.

Ermita dismissed suggestions that the Palace wanted Acting Justice Secretary Artemio Panganiban on the list.

"There's no such thing as wanting to see anybody's name there," he told reporters.

In returning the JBC's list, the Palace was not necessarily rejecting the names earlier submitted to fill up the vacancies left by retired Justices Isagani Cruz and Alicia Austria-Martinez, Ermita said.

No names scratched

"We cannot assume that the first names submitted will be scratched out," he said.

He said what it meant was that the JBC should make an additional list, and the original names would still be included in the revised list.

The six nominees initially submitted by Ms Arroyo's predecessor were Court of Appeals Justices Martin Villarama, Hakim Abdulwahid and Mariano del Castillo, Sandiganbayan Justice Francisco Ibe, Israel, University of Santo Tomas law school dean Sedfrey Ordoñez Abad, and lawyer Rodolfo Robles.

Ermita said the six nominees should not be disheartened by Ms Arroyo's asking for a wider range of choices.

"If I were in the list, I would not withdraw because who knows, my name might still be chosen," he said.

Ermita said Malacañang would not go to the extent of submitting names to the JBC, as doing so would be "tantamount to trying to influence" the body.

"I hope it's clear that the President just wants to have a wider [range] of choices with the additional names [the original names] submitted," he said.

R. Evardone; 65

RODRIGO F. EVARDONE, ELDEST BROTHER of Emilora Soriano Gov. Ben D. Evardone and UCBP GDS member of the board Philip Evardone, succumbed to multiple organ failure on Tuesday night at the ICU of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute after a long bout with cancer. He was 65.

He remains are now at the chapel of Mt. Sinai church on Broadway Street, New Manila, Quezon City, and will be brought home Saturday to Barangay San Mariano, Isabel, Leyte's Soriano. Interment is set for Thursday.

He is survived by wife Silvia, only daughter Marjorie, seven sons-Rex, grandchildren Reyes and Rima, sister Consuelo and brothers Delfin, Fortuno, Philip and Ben.

AFP stands by story linking Melissa to NPA

By Dil Tup
in Manila
and Tonette Orejas
in Pampanga

THE SPOKESPERSON OF THE Armed Forces yesterday said it was building a case against Filipina American activist Melissa Roxas based on witnesses' claim she had once taken up arms for the communist New People's Army (NPA) as an active cadre.

"According to the evidence, she's been involved in NPA activities since 2000" and had even "carried a weapon" on armed localities in Aurora and Quezon, where she had stayed, Col. Romeo Brawner said.

"She really joined the activities of the NPA in Aurora [and] Quezon. It could be cadre or some communication and other armed conflicts," Brawner told the Bernardino Abella Forum at Club Filipino in San Juan City.

According to Brawner, at least two witnesses—former NPA rebels who purportedly worked with Roxas—are prepared to testify on the extent of her involvement in the NPA.

He said he was not privy to the details, and that what he knew included the information that Roxas had come and gone to Isaac Valley starting in 2000 as an intermediate cadre.

Roxas is a member of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan chapter in the Philippines.

Suspicious dining

Brawner reiterated that Roxas' purported abduction and torture were NPA members' themselves who wanted to dissuade her from leaving the group.

"We need to establish if there was indeed an abduction, or if there was, if the abduction had been staged," he said.

Brawner also said the timing of Roxas' appearance was suspicious, considering that President Macapagal-Arroyo was about to deliver her State of the Nation Address and to visit the United States for a meeting with US President Barack Obama.

Based on the findings of the Office of the Solicitor General, everything was just orchestrated to point holes at the credibility of the LOOV," he said.

He added that depending on the depth of Roxas' purported involvement in NPA activities, she could face charges for robbery, extortion and murder.

THAT GIRL "I know that girl in the video," a weeping Melissa Roxas tells the hearing at the House of Representatives.

Not biased

But in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, the chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division said Roxas' name did not appear in previous Army intelligence reports already being connected when operating in Central Luzon.

"The most that we have are aliases," Maj. Gen. Ralph Villanueva said in an interview on the sidelines of the Pentagon's visit yesterday.

Villanueva said Roxas' purported alias, Ka Aya, was also not on previous lists the Army personnel have been assigned to check the identities of the top names.

"The Saturday report of Asst Sup. Ani Alcover and Ramzy Ruiz [over the Palparan] gave a different character of Roxas. We are verifying this. If she's indeed an [NPA rebel], then she has a different motive in coming out," Villanueva said.

Melissa denies she's the girl in 'NPA video,' confronts Palparan

From page A1

She raised the same points at a public hearing conducted by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) later in the day, with Representatives Jocelyn Palparan and Daisy Alcover of the party-list groups Bantay and Alagad, respectively, in attendance.

At the House hearing, CHR Chair Leila de Lima said the commission had found that the disfigured Imelda Marquez saved "Love in the Time of Cholera" and Roxas' abductors gave her was bought from a National Bookstore branch in Cubao-on-City, the capital of Nueva Ecija. The discovery was made with the cooperation of the bookstore and verified through the book's bar code.

Bataan's Mayor Boy Sotto Domingo observed that the store's location was an indication that Roxas was held by her abductors in a nearby camp.

De Lima earlier said the military's Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija was being considered among the places where Roxas could have been held.

Roxas, 31, has claimed that she and her two companions—Juanito Catubos and Edward Jandoc—were forcibly taken by armed men to La Mesa, Bataan, on May 19. She said she was accused of being an NPA rebel, held and tortured for six days, and freed after she pretended that she was willing to return to the fold of the law.

She flew in the United States early in June, shortly after filing a petition for a writ of amparo. She returned on the Philippines last week to pass her case.

'Savings'

In her testimony at the House, Roxas said "SC," one of her abductors, had shown her pictures that she believed were taken from the video shown to the media by Palparan and Alcover last weekend.

"I denied that was me. Its the pictures[and that's not me. And I'd like to know who presented the video. Palparan and Alcover, where did you get it? Did BC give it to you?" Roxas said, her voice shaky.

Palparan, a retired major general, is nicknamed "Berdugo" (Butcher) by many anti-administration groups who accuse him of involvement in the disappearances and deaths of activists and human rights workers.

The committee chair, Quezon Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III, earlier had also asked Roxas if she was the person in the video.

"I'm not," she declared.

In her opening statement, Roxas said she was an artist and activist. "I do not want to dignify the allegations being hurled at me now as they only echo what my abductors made me say during my interrogation and illegal, incommunicado detention," she said.

She also said she had filed a petition for the writ of habeas corpus on January all records on the military pertaining to her being illegally detained and tortured but right to privacy.

Basic human right

De Lima said it was important to determine the source of the video to establish if it was authentic.

She added that even if a person were a rebel, this would not diminish the allegation of torture. "Her affiliation doesn't matter. It is a basic human right — freedom from torture. She body deserves to be tortured, not even prisoners of war."

De Lima also opposed to all parties not to engage in psywar tactics or propaganda in that the truth would come out.

Asked why she thought it was the military who had abducted her, Roxas said that during her captivity, she saw a man wearing camouflage pants walk by. She said the pattern and brassiness of her interrogation

BANTAY party-list Rep. Jovito Palparan and Anad party-list Rep. Daisy Alcover (right) consult each other during the continuing hearing of the Commission on Human Rights on the alleged abduction and torture of Ka Aya Melissa Roxas (left).

also contributed to her belief.

She added that when she told one of her abductors that they had tortured her, he denied it and said the "special operations group" had done it.

Domingo said it was possible that Roxas had been mistaken for another activist, hence her abduction.

He noted that the abductors had addressed Roxas as "Wahid" and thought she was a Canadian citizen. He said the abductors may have been after a Canadian activist named Maria Santiago, whom he met at a mass action in Vancouver in 1997.

Roxas also said her abduction stopped physically abusing her when she said she was a US citizen.

Where did they get it?

At the CHR hearing, Roxas tried to confront Palparan and Alcover on the source of the video.

"I want to ask Palparan and Alcover, Where did they get that video which BC showed me?" Roxas said angrily.

She was promptly told by De Lima that she was not allowed to pose questions to the other resource persons.

Roxas did not mention the photos during the CHR's first public hearing on her case on July 23. She said yesterday that she remembered that BC had shown her the photos only after she saw the video presented in a press conference by Palparan and Alcover.

The two men said they had separately received letters and photos from an unnamed source who claimed that Roxas was her comrade in the NPA. Only Alcover sent out the video.

Roxas' lawyer, Rex Fortaleza, said the photos and video should be "expunged" from the CHR hearing as evidence because it pertained to his client's "informational privacy."

Fernandez pointed out that it was not Roxas who was on trial.

Political affiliation

Palparan told the CHR that Roxas' affiliation was relevant to the hearing because she had failed to disclose her true identity. It was an apparent swipe at De Lima's husband, Atty. Jose Miguel Arroyo, who cited that the commission was looking into Roxas' abduction and torture and not her political affiliation.

De Lima said the claim that Roxas was an NPA member was "possibly an important peripheral issue on [her] credibility," but added that freedom from torture was a "nonderogable human right" regardless of whether it was carried out by the military or the NPA.

Or. De Lima's questioning, Roxas repeatedly denied that she was an NPA member.

She was also shown the sketches of her purported abductors and interrogators, and she confirmed that the sketches matched her recollection.

She confessed to until the angle drawn to give the CHR commissioners an idea of the place where she was held.

Roxas later asked to be excused from the hearing, saying she felt weak and tired after spending almost the entire day at two inquiries into her abduction and torture.

Raymond Manalo

At the same hearing, Bayan Muna's Ocampo denied the claim made by Palparan and Alcover that his had known of Roxas' abduction.

Palparan and Alcover, in the course of the hearing, barged on Ocampo's pass as a member of the CPP-NPA and challenged him to denounce armed revolution. They said Ocampo had never done so even after his status as spokesperson of the National Democratic Front, the CPP's political wing.

In response, Ocampo said the two men had no evidence of their claims. This prompted Palparan to say that he had been repeatedly accused of ordering the murder of activists even without evidence.

Out of nowhere, former Bayan Raymond Manalo was next drawn in Palparan's "Ate huhay pa ako? Pinatay ako ng akala ko—ng mga kasama ko" (I'm still alive? I was ordered killed by my supposed comrades) line of attack.

Manalo had earlier testified that he and his brother Reynaldo were taken by soldiers and reportedly tortured, and that they were able to escape.

As Manalo was half-sung, De Lima interrupted that one should "learn or forget" him and that the CHR would "deal with him."

Later, Palparan told reporters that he was surprised to learn that the man who had raged at him was Manalo.

"I was looking at him during the hearing and I didn't know who he was," Palparan said. "I wasn't hurt."

Blood relation

At the hearing, Alcover expressed his confidence in Roxas' credibility and integrity in view of her being related to Juliet de Lima, the wife of DP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison.

De Lima told Alcover that if she "confirmed" that she was related to Sison's wife, "does that make me a communist too?"

Alcover replied to Filipino: "There might be some influence because according to you, you have blood relations."

Initially, Alcover said he would only turn over a copy of the video and the photos and sketches as he answered them the hearing. But he stayed on after conferring with Palparan and his lawyers.

Alcover said he was an NPA rebel for 18 years during the Marcos dictatorship.

He said Anad's advocacy was to "support and oppose the Macoy [CPP]" and that it represented the latter's victims and former members.

SC told Comelec abdicates control over polls to Smartmatic-TIM

From page A1

Smartmatic-TIM: Information Management (TIM).

Roque said that on report at the Armed Company Secret Department had said that a "complete abdication" of control had been made by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to the group that won the bidding for the P7.2-billion project.

"The Comelec did not abdicate," said lawyer Victor Lacanilao of Smartmatic-TIM. He said that the group merely simply developing the electronic capability for the poll body. "We will follow the Comelec."

The ICM votes is the high tribunal ending at first a temporary restraining order to stop the signing of the contract and it is later granted ending a halt to the disbursement of payments to the consortium.

Both supreme were not acted upon immediately and instead, the court ordered yesterday's oral arguments.

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez in their defense Roque's claims as "ridiculous." He said that Roque never reminded the Comelec and that his allegations were "based on fears of what might happen."

During interpellation, Roque admitted to Chief Justice Reylar to Puno that he never went to the Comelec to verify his claims.

"You admitted in your manual that the Comelec entered into a contract with the joint venture corporation and not with either Smartmatic or TIM," Jimenez urged, pointing out that the contract with the winning bidder "explicitly" gave the Comelec the power to supervise.

He also ascribed to Roque for assuming that Smartmatic-TIM would have control over the election results simply because it contracted the manufacture of the public and private keys for the 82,200 machines to be used in the balloting.

IT capability worries

The keys, Jimenez said, would be provided by Verizon, an American technology company that provides security infrastructure for e-commerce and other Internet transactions.

"Smartmatic having contracted Verizon to make the keys doesn't necessarily mean it would have control of the election," he said.

During their interpellation of Roque, the magistrates appeared concerned about the Comelec's limited capability to supervise the automated elections and the integrity of the system.

At one point, Associate Justice Teresita de Castro asked Roque if overgunning the Comelec and employing IT experts would help the election body monitor poll-vesting before the 2010 elections.

Not enough time for testing

"I don't think there's enough time and manpower to have [a] lot testing," Roque said. "What I'm suggesting is to have a test procedure elsewhere."

He also questioned the decision of Smartmatic-TIM and Comelec to conduct only a full-day session for teachers who would be assigned to handle the vesting machines as members of the Board of Election Inspectors.

"How many of the teachers are unfamiliar with IT technology, the Comelec should have allotted more time in training them," Associate Justice Eduardo Nachura asked Roque about the accuracy of the printed vote-counting system (PCOS).

He noted that the machines counted the ballots cast with 100 percent accuracy in both the last test that the Comelec conducted.

Vendor put best foot forward

But Roque said the tests were conducted "to let the vendor put their best foot forward." He said that the tests did not simulate the actual conditions inside the poll precincts.

Nachura also stressed that the Comelec should have control of the keys "to prevent hacking and protect the machines from unauthorized persons."

Puno said Roque's petition was obviously aimed at questioning the constitutionality of the poll automation contract.

He said that if Roque's allegation that Smartmatic has majority control over the joint venture company was true, then the contract would be rendered unlawful and that it would violate the Anti-Dummy Law.

As stipulated in the 1986 Constitution, foreign entities are only allowed to own 40 percent of the stake in locally listed business corporations.

"To me you changing you (previous) against the poll automation contract) since the power almost all decision to election of the Constitution?" Puno quipped.

"No your honor, precisely because violation of the Constitution constitutes grave abuse of discretion," Roque replied.

Pilot testing

The COM's parties contend on the absence of pilot testing of Smartmatic-TIM's PCOS, the proposed absence of a common answer between the consortium partners and the alleged absence of compliance to system requirements under the law.

Roque said that the poll automation law required the pilot testing of the election system in two highly urbanized cities or in two provinces each in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

He also questioned the Comelec's decision to recognize "the inconsistent differences" between Smartmatic and TIM.

"What would stop (the two firms) from having another irreconcilable difference six days before the 2010 elections," Roque said.

He said the only protection that Filipinos have is P1 billion worth of bonds.

"It's not a matter of peso and cents ... What will happen to democracy?" Roque said, referring to the scenario if there should be failure of elections as a result of the Smartmatic-TIM system.

First step needed

Associate Justice Renato Corona asked Roque why CHR was trying to pressure the conduct of the country's first automated elections.

"Isn't it better to take the second first step?" Corona said. "There's gap, so be a learning curve," he added.

Roque said the correct first step was to make the 2010 elections the pilot test of the automated system using five or change election system software in key cities and provinces nominated by the poll commission head.

"I agree that there should be a learning curve, let's do it first by little," Roque said.

Lawyers' group seeks arrest of COA, BIR, Customs chiefs

By Tina G. Santos and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A LAWYERS' GROUP YESTERDAY ASKED A Manila court to order the arrest of the heads of the Commission on Audit (COA) and the customs and internal revenue bureaus for their continued disobedience of the court's order to examine the account books of the Big 5 oil companies.

The Social Justice Society (SJS) asked Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. to issue arrest warrants against the officials "for their deliberate, obdurate and contumacious refusal to obey the lawful order" of the court and to detain them until they comply with the order.

Pampilo earlier directed the heads of the agencies to explain within 72 hours why they should not be cited for contempt for failure to comply with his April 2009 order to open and examine the books of accounts of Chevron, Petron and Pilipinas Shell.

Gov't counsel

The judge's July 24 order was reportedly received and received on the same day by the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), an official serving as the counsel for the government agencies.

The SJS said the 72-hour period expired last Tuesday.

Pampilo last April directed the COA, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to form a panel that would conduct the examination of cash receipts, cash disbursement books, purchase orders on petroleum products, delivery receipts, sales invoices and other related documents on the purchases of petroleum products of the three firms from January 2003 to December 2008.

The judge's order stemmed from a complaint filed by the SJS, which accused the oil companies of using pricing schemes grossly disadvantageous to the public.

Last July 7, the judge denied for lack of merit separate motions for reconsideration seeking to stop his order filed by the BOC and the oil firms.

The judge ruled that there was no law or jurisprudence that prohibits government entities from performing acts that would best serve the public.

At a hearing of the energy committee of the House of Representatives yesterday, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo said the committee would summon the COA, the BIR and the BOC to update the committee on the progress of their audit of the oil companies as ordered by Pampilo.

"Nothing the oil firms is the only way we will find out if prices are really overpriced or not," said Arroyo, the committee chair.

Saying they are willing to open their books for auditing, oil companies defended their prices as being fair and reasonable before the committee.

"We have always been transparent with our financial situation. We are open to public audits as long as it is by the right agency," said Chevron spokesperson Mark Quadrozi.

Some of the oil companies claimed that they actually incurred millions of pesos in losses last year.

Shell spokesperson Hobert Rasapi said their corporate income tax, like industries, oil companies have been generating smaller profits. While banks companies, for instance, made 12.1 percent in profits last year, oil companies only made some 2.3 percent, he said.

Industry losses

Melito Enrino, corporate affairs manager of Total Phil. said the company lost P974 million last year.

Zenaida Monsada, oil industry management bureau director for the Department of Energy, told the committee that four out of nine oil companies incurred net losses last year: Petron, Caltex, Phoenix and Flying V.

Monsada said oil price increases in Metro Manila are lower than the increases in labor threat market prices. She said the Philippines, an oil importer, has among the lowest oil prices in Southeast Asia, its price just slightly higher than those of Indonesia and Malaysia which both produce and exports oil.

But George San Mateo, secretary general of Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng mga Super Diesel Motorcycle Philippines, said he doubted the claims that oil prices in the country are lower than international rates. He urged the committee to review the Oil Deregulation Law

House approves CARP extension

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES YESTERday ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the bill extending the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, putting the measure one step closer to becoming law.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, a proponent of the measure, said the salient features of the bill include the extension of the compulsory acquisition of land by the government for distribution to farmers.

Another 10 percent of the program's P150 billion budget will be allotted for liberalized and subsidized rural credit facilities, Lagman said.

Fifteen percent will go to farm input, while five percent will be for training and assistance for agrarian reform beneficiaries.

The remaining 30 percent will be for farm-related support services such as farm-to-market roads, production and post-harvest facilities and finding markets for the products of the beneficiaries. Leila M. Salaverria

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, July 30, 2009
17th Week in Ordinary Time
Peter Chrysologus

1st Reading: Ex 40:16-21, 34-38
Gospel: Mt 13:47-53

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a big fishing net let down into the sea, in which every kind of fish has been caught. When the net is full, it is dragged ashore. Then they sit down and gather the good fish in baskets, but throw the worthless ones away. That is how it will be at the end of time. The angels will go out to separate the wicked from the just and throw them into the blazing furnace, where they will weep and gnash their teeth."

Jesus asked, "Have you understood all these things?" "Yes," they answered. So he said to them, "You will see that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom is like a householder who can produce from his storeroom new things as well as old."

When Jesus had finished these parables, he left the place.

Commentary:

Once one feels true, or vulnerable, any prepared, the heather can it up in the midst of their camp, even after they had arrived in camera. The dead of concerned the tabernacle, the dearest day, it rested a cloud, which the sun could widen. The cloud was evidence of God's presence, as he saves the dead subjects of the heathen, so that they might serve again, promise whether or not God can entering them. It guided their camp through the wilderness. When the cloud rested on the tabernacle, they remained stationed, many days in camp.

Those of us, who are stranded in the world, should know that anniversary about the future is announced by rain, it doesn't help to have hope in God, only when we are settled in the world. We thought that in this heathen world Cosme should be a stranger for us now to put off the care of our souls. God's glory filled the tabernacle, but what blessed could we do, Christ does. He invites us to draw near by following the example of Christ, so we hope to bring our very especially others all around us to the kingdom of heaven.

How Cory made her graceful exit with leadership

From page A1

In her six years in office, Cory faced many more challenges than any of the country's leaders. As Nancy once said, "I pity the next President after Marcos."

But Cory's reluctant shoulders took the task of rebuilding a democracy in shambles—drafting a new Constitution, conducting free elections, installing an independent judiciary, restoring a free press, and pursuing peace with rebels and secessionists.

Most significant task

To Cory, however, the last and perhaps most significant task was to ensure the peaceful and orderly transfer of power to the next administration. This was the best way to safeguard our fledgling democracy. Many years later, we still quote her.

Cory left no room for misinterpretation. She knew that of all issues that two decades under the dictators Ferdinand Marcos, the last thing we needed was another leader desperately clinging to power.

So, during her last State of the Nation Address (Sona) in July 1991, she announced the formation of a transition team that would make sure the business of power would be as smooth as possible.

This is in stark contrast to this week's Sona, which left the country's two major newspapers in disagreement as to whether stepping down is or all in President Macapagal-Arroyo's plans.

Transition team focus

In 1991, Cory directed me to lead the transition team, and she promptly signed an executive order to restore funding for the project. It had been 28 years since Diosdado Macapagal turned over the reins of government to Marcos, so no kind of established procedures to follow.

I decided, along with lawyers Cielo Imbong, who was then head of the Presidential Management Staff, to send Undersecretary Jose Paje to Washington to study the turnover processes of the United States.

The result was the first-ever comprehensive program for presidential transition in the Philippines.

We identified three areas to concentrate on. First was the continued management of ongoing policies and economic issues in the first half of 1992, which was supposed to ensure that the next administration would not be saddled with problematic legacies at the beginning of its term.

Second was the provision of logistical and administrative assistance to the next administration. Third was the documentation of the accomplishments and legacies of the Aquino administration.

Organizational, special reports

Each department and agency prepared Organizational Transition Reports for their successors containing achievements, work yet to be done, and problems that may arise.

There were also Special Transition Reports that tackled national security, economic issues and other critical matters the government corporations, agencies reform, and reorganization.

But today? It looks like most Cabinet officials are too busy campaigning amidst the pains of defending their agency's achievements.

Red and blue books

Another interesting output of the transition team was a "red book" and a "blue book." The red book was a list of all political appointees that can be replaced by the incoming President.

The blue book, on the other hand, was a database of all career executive service officers (whose positions were supposed to be permanent). This was meant to ensure continuity and stability of governmental operations.

Today, civil service officers face a situation wherein unqualified people are appointed to permanent positions, while qualified career officers are appointed in acting capacities to positions that should have been permanent.

This is ironic, considering that a strong government bureaucracy is a primary requirement for a parliamentary system of government.

Series of books

For the third track, the transition team prepared a series of books on the Aquino administration. These included the President's Report, along with individual reports as well as videos on issues like policy, decentralization, autonomy and other aspects of governance.

These were distributed to schools, libraries, embassies and media agencies. Leafing through them again, I wonder that much of what Cory did as President went unheeded, given how callous she was to the idea of doing things for show in the PR purposes.

There are photos of her with children, with the sick, and with victims of disasters, which seem to made it to the front pages of newspapers.

But today's approval ratings hungry incumbent, this would have been unthinkable.

With grace, leadership

Cory was decent, let's point against her critics, but she accepted her role and her responsibilities with humility, strength, and simplicity. And when it was time to make her exit, she did so not just with grace but also with leadership.

I can only hope that those who assume office here follow her example.

(Editor's Note: Franklin Drilon served as labor, media and executive secretary during the Aquino administration. He succeeded to the Senate in 1995 and 2001, and served as Senate President from April to November 2000 and from 2001 to 2008. He is a member of the Former Senior Government Officials, a group that has been highly critical of the Arroyo administration.)

Cory condition stable; more healing Masses set, more accolades

From page A1

who doctors are monitoring her, because things could change," he also said on one point.

In various churches, prayers and healing Masses continued to be said for the cancer-stricken heroine of the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution, which toppled then President Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship.

40-hour adoration

The Shrine of Our Lady of Peace in Edsa will offer a 40-hour collective adoration of the sacrament (beginning at 4pm today) for Cory's recovery.

The Mass will start at 7 p.m. tonight with a Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Teodoro Bacani.

On Aug. 1, a silent procession with Our Lady of Fatima, starting at Edsa 2000, will be held starting at 5:30 a.m. The closing ceremony will be held at the center of the shrine at 6 p.m. with a Mass and will be capped by a procession of the Lady of Edsa.

The Quezon Cave is in honor of the first Asian spirit in the south. The devotion started in Milan in 1918, with the Blessed Sacrament displayed continuously for 40 hours during a time of calamity.

The prayer groups supporting the Edsa Shrine said the prayer vigil include the Sacred Land of Sun, Wellspring of Life Community, Marian Movement Catholic Group, Lumineers Group of Edsa, Hijos de Maria and Knights of Mary.

Catholic schools

The 79-year-old Aquino, fondly called Cory, has Stage 4 colon cancer that has been confined at Makati Medical Center for a month now.

"We ask all our member schools to offer daily prayers and Masses, to sacrifice and to continue to storm heaven with prayers for the restoration for Cory and our country until the peace of the Lord and the light of truth reign over us again," said the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), the biggest organized group of Catholic schools in the country with 1,200 members.

Its statement included this short prayer:

"Lord, grant President Cory peace and grace that she may overcome her illness. Sth pray for strength for the people of our nation as we look up to the Lord for the comfort of eternal life and peaceful resting spirit of true statesmanship, our dear President Cory. Bless our leaders and grant them discernment to banish their selfish interests and do what is truly good for the country. Amen."

The 100th anniversary of Edsa should not be too much all of us are prepare for a crucial homecoming in the life of our country—the elections in May 2010," it said.

Marcos Jr. etc.

The late dictator's son and namesake issued a statement saying his family's thoughts and prayers were with the Aquinos in this difficult time.

"I know how her family feels because we also went through the same experience with my father," said Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"Let's drop politics on this one and just wish the Former President peace in her heart and comfort in her pains. Pa-

From page A1

rabuhin ko ang mga kababayan ko na ipagdasal natin si Pangulong Cory. Kung ano man ang pagkakaiba natin sa pulitika, sa ganitong pagkakataon ay dapat nating kalimutan muna ang mga ito," he said.

Former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who once served as Aquino's defense secretary, said:

Sen. Gringo Honasan, a former colonel whose defiance in the 1986 Snap Presidential Election helped Marcos lose power, said that God exists as can best prayers against problems, trials and difficulties in life, "he said.

The former chief of staff, kung and kidney ailments in 1989. His health began to fail soon before he was sentenced in 1998.

Other key figures

Key figures of Edsa I who are or had a falling out with Aquino said they were also in prayers.

"I will pray for her. She is in the hands of God," said former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, who once served as Aquino's defense secretary.

Imelda presses return of jewelry

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA Marcos has again asked the court to return her pieces of jewelry since they are not covered by any court case.

In a manifestation filed with the Sandiganbayan Special Division, Marcos and her daughter Irene Araneta-Marcos submitted a motion asking the Office of the Solicitor General to submit a report on the government's use of these jewelry collections seized from the Marcoses after the people power revolution in 1986.

The pieces of jewelry seized after the Marcoses fell from power are valued at more than P20 billion. There are three collections: The Malacañang collection, which includes pieces found in Malacañang; the Hawaii collection seized by the United States Customs; and the Rosenbolm collection the Philippine Bureau of Customs seized from a Greek national.

Marcos is after the Malacañang and Hawaii collections.

Knee-jerk reaction

Marcos said the government's motion to keep the Rosenbolm collection was merely a "knee-jerk reaction" to her earlier motion that pointed out the collections were not covered by any court case.

Marcos said: "Obviously, the OSG filed that [motion] to make it appear that the pieces of jewelry are under the court of sequestering action for forfeiture."

She added in her motion that Civil Case No. 0141, one of the forfeiture cases against the Marcoses, just "tribally mentioned" the pieces of jewelry.

On June 24, the Office of the Solicitor General filed a motion for partial summary judgment, asking the court to award the Malacañang Collection to the government.

Not biting

The OSG had also requested scheduled at 8:30 June 24 and filed at least four matters. The origin of the collection, where the pieces were acquired, the cost and the condition of the jewelry pieces.

But Marcos said they would "not bite for the bait of the OSG."

She said in her motion that "including in the request for submission is tantamount to acknowledging that the subjects [pieces of jewelry] are included in the instant case."

Marcos said she would continue to oppose the OSG's bid to have the Malacañang Collection forfeited in favor of the government.

Alert up for fake flu vaccine

By Dona Pazolingan

THE BUREAU OF FOOD AND Drugs has warned the public and drugstore owners against a fake flu vaccine that illegally went to the brand name Synagrip.

"Reports have it that the flu vaccine purportedly contains only distilled water," the BFAD said in a public health advisory dated July 28 but issued only yesterday.

The advisory came after the National Bureau of Investigation seized some P4 million worth of counterfeit fake vaccines being passed off as products of the pharmaceutical company Sanofi Pasteur, maker of Synagrip which is an inactivated influenza vaccine.

BFAD reminded drugstore owners to stop only from sources who are duly licensed and accredited by the government to distribute the same of the medicines and must cooperate for seamless sales investors or receipts that indicate the source of the medicines and must cooperate for seamless and expiry dates.

"The refusal of the source to issue and indicate the aforementioned information should give rise to suspicion and must be reported immediately to BFAD," it added.

Finally, all consumers are advised to purchase flu vaccine and other drugs and medicines only from outlets duly licensed by BFAD and to declare receipts as well," BFAD continued.

Corrections

IN THE JULY 25 ISSUE...an Aurora Province ordinance—"Senate Session Nov 15 and 16ll plan stand"—mistranslated the age of Benita Narciso when she gave birth to her son Dante in 1995. Benita was 41—not 66.

IN THE JULY 29 ISSUE...a boat capsizes...."Fusaro child of [expunged] Alyssa suffers mild drowned"—mistranslated the name of the journalist's late grandchild who was killed since President Aquino took office in 2001. The information came from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

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OPINION

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Ramdam(ned)

EDITORIAL

IN HER NINTH STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS, President Macapagal-Arroyo did not address the corruption issues that haunt her administration—for reasons easy to understand. Except for a single mention, about the alleged lack of proof, the scandals that have defined the Arroyo legacy since at least 2005 got short shrift, not only because the administration refuses to engage its critics in an earnest hunt for evidence, but also because the issue is not exactly the President's strongest suit.

By the same token, much of the ninth Sona was taken up by discussions of economic progress since the President assumed office in 2001. Indeed, the Sona started with a comparison-and-contrast, between the worrisome gloom generated by the global financial crisis and the still-bright (or not-altogether-dim) prospects of the Philippine economy.

It would be foolhardy, and not completely candid, to begrudge the administration, especially the economic managers, the recognition they deserve. But to say this does not mean accepting the President's breathtaking arc of reductionism, equating the Philippine nation with the domestic economy. "The state of our nation is a strong economy," she told, almost at the beginning of her 55-minute speech.

Strength is relative, and it is easy to understand why the President focused on the following economic indicators: Average inflation rate: "Our average inflation is the lowest since 1966. Late June, it dropped to 1.5 percent." The boom in tourism: "In the last four years tourism arrivals doubled. It is now a $5-billion industry." The resilience of the now dominant process outsourcing industry: "But BPO remained resilient. With earnings of $6 billion and employment of 680,000, the BPO phenomenon speaks eloquently of our competitiveness and productivity." And so on.

But unemployment remains a persistent threat, the pace of foreign direct investments in the country continues to lag behind those of our major neighbors in the region, the export industry is still reeling from the effects of a global recession. Is it any wonder that the President's main public relations campaign is an attempt to tell the public that the benefits of growth in some key economic indicators are something that they actually, already, feel?

That's the whole point of the "ramdam ang kaunlaran" publicity campaign. In the fifth paragraph of the Sona, the President pretended to be unaware of the popularity-enhancement measures. "I did not become President to be popular. To work, to lead, to protect and preserve our country, our people, that is why I became President."

The reason for this curious innocence is defined by the President's abysmal approval or satisfaction ratings. While popularity can be over-emphasized or abused in a democracy, unpopularity cannot, by itself, be considered proof of performance or competence. True, even though President Arroyo has told anyone and everyone that she is no longer in the popularity game, that what lies ahead, in the next year, is not "politics" but "work," her continuing "ramdam" campaign proves that she has not left the players' table.

Her continuing use of this-is-where-your-money-goes billboards, placed strategically beside even the smallest public-works project, subconsciously suggests that the President still has her eye on "politics." If she didn't, would she care if no GMA Cares billboard ever goes up again?

Not least, her persistent failure to acknowledge the people-pleasing, popularity-enhancing, vote-getting nature of some of her special initiatives began before the 2004 elections—government subsidies, short-term employment projects, aggressive health-insurance drives, and so on—tells us she doesn't see anything wrong with them. Even if they are an economist's nightmare, even if they are a budget-balancer's bad dream.

In other words, the President has also had the unfortunate tendency to abandon good economic policy, when her personal, political interest is at stake. That is the true state of our poor "ramdam" nation.

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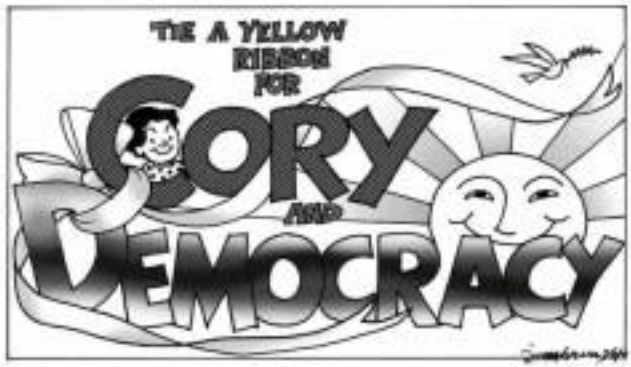

180-degree wanderers

VIEWPOINT

JOAN L. MERCADO

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA—HEPHAPHES

ing it the "Great U Turn." Think tanks use that caption for the 180-degree course reversal by migrant workers as recession bites.

"Global migration flows have reversed for the first time since the Depression," notes the Wall Street Journal. But where does this "U-turn" go from here? Net migrant-exporting countries, like the Philippines, that's the overriding term.

For years, North America, oil-fuel Middle Eastern countries and European labor markets sought brain and hands from abroad. In Southeast Asia, migrants from Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines streamed towards better-off Singapore or Hong Kong. Metropolises transformed overnight, from South Korea to Iraq, into voracious labor importers. Filipinos and other migrants paddled the United Arab Emirates' population by more than 6 percent a year (it will dip for the year.)

Worldwide, the share of migrants in total population more than doubled (from 4 to 10 percent) between 1960 and 2005, the United Nations estimates. Workers returned to countries like the Philippines, Bangladesh, Guatemala and Tajikistan almost $300 billion last year.

Now World Bank forecasts predict declining by 6 percent this year. The cuts come in a remote 200 Orbcodes period.

One out of every nine Filipinos work abroad today. They are audacious (called, rumor in the United Kingdom), unless off Australia and points in the United States (about 2 percent of points outlined in the US last year came from Asia). Almost 1,000 Filipinos migrate daily.

There are Overseas Filipino Workers. For her predecessor Gloria Diandao and Cesar Maroso were cancelled in connection with the Diaer-Cashio case.

They are a minority. Some of the jobless have returned. But most remain abroad to seek other jobs.

In early 2009, more Mexicans returned (130,000) than left (127,000) for the US. Impaired conditions in Colombia and economic opportunities are attracting Brazilians. Jobless in the US declined by as much as 400,000—from a peak of about three million in 2006, says New Immigrant author Jeffrey Passel.

Many migrants opt to ride out the recession abroad, rather than go home, observes Gregory Hamot of the International Development Bank. "Developed countries have suffered substantial job losses. But the prospect in their home countries is even worse."

They, migrants will dig in and stay actually are growing demand as employers trade down to lower-cost labor, argues economist Jayant Ghosh in Yale Global Online. Yet are seeing anecdotal evidence of OFWs who tighten belts rather than go overseas for a second stint.

Remittance key food, medicine, repairs the house, send kids to school, etc. Human nature being what it is, some dribble away for such fights, alcohol and fishpool on roulette any it paid. But the lag in savings and investments could hits deepest most.

Public confidence in shutter and employees are cushioned. Backlash against foreign workers is escalating.

One out of every three workers in Singapore is a foreigner. Like much of Asia, its exports collapsed by a stunning 23 percent in January, the Washington Post notes. They may come in "an epic error ... of a new flow of reverse migration."

"Thousands of foreign workers, including London School of Economics graduates with no-dept salaries and desperately poor Bangladeshi factory workers, are returning home," the paper adds. Singapore's unemployment rate is currently 3.5 workers—by end of 2010. The spot is now.

State of war

THERE'S THE RUB

CONRADO de QUIROS

THE RUMOR THE HEARD IS THAT MALA cahoog started the rumor. That rumor was that Cory died last Friday, a rumor that spread faster than Darden Ello's widow-to-be-buy.

Even the British Embassy was duped into believing it and issuing a statement rumbling with the Queen and the Filipino nation. What's sparked some idiotic reactions, not least from Ozzie Jimenez, the fellow who says you chained himself and white only to end up being party to it, who demanded that whoever was responsible for the statement be made persona non grata.

The "rumor" being scrutinized in the same way as Cory's former chief legal adviser, Adolph Azcuna? For spontaneously condemning into lamentation and commiserating with the host nation for its unreasonable loss? That is to say thirty-hatten people to their graves? If so, then we should confide every day with GMA's family, lifestyles that will do the wish. Some people ought to recover from their sicknesses, others ought to be dead.

But to go back: The rumor I heard is that Malacañang sparked the rumor to see how the public would react to Cory's demise. Is it believable? I don't know, though stranger things have happened in this country. But whether true or not, I believe how the public will react to Cory's demise is not farthest from their minds. The force is a the one thing that terrifies them. The force is the one thing that drives them out of their dwelling inside.

The one thing EDSA has never allowed since the took power, and especially since she screwed it by telling Gonzalez seemed to win by a mil. Ten votes over her nearest rival, is people massing in the streets in numbers that would come to another Edsa. Cops and soldiers have vastly prevented groups from gathering at the Edsa Shrine, headed off inflate groups to prevent them from swelling the ranks of those gathered at the Ninoy statue (very enough in light of those people advertising themselves with antagonist flags and even more antagonist slogans while marching down Edsa), scuttled rallies, imposed curfews on them (7 p.m. or thereabouts), floated rumors about bombings and other acts of violence in the rallies, and intimidated by coming out in the streets in full combat gear.

The plan has been successful enough thus far, literally has even reached the proportion of Edsa I and II. But the rallies in 2005 in the wake of "Hello, Garci" (which Malacañang met with "calibrated preemptive response"), not Imelda Lim's "withdrawal of support" (which gave Malacañang the excuse to impose emergency with a state-of-emergency declaration), not the huge rally to protest MIR, which were marshalled, thanks to the plan above.

But what happens if, heaven forbid, something should happen to Cory?

If the rag-behalf of the Manila Cathedral, the headaches for Malacañang will be epic. In the first place that is Alfredo Lim-seventy-lass, of course, is the tough-as-nails mayor of Manila, the fastest tough-as-nails MR director, and the former tough-as-nails chief of the Western Police District, who once famously shot a man in the Dalaw' street of Cory's passing. He is also a tough-as-nails follower of Cory whose loyalty has never wavered, who indeed went out to fight all Erelio's and Estrada's legions when they tried to grab power from her in 1998. Lim put a cordon around him for it.

It rigil in the Manila Cathedral will be unforgettable. A vigil in the Manila Cathedral will be unmissable.

Quite apart from that, there is Filipino Cultures standing like the Pyrons of Gad in the way. Even things are not so serious, Filipinos love one of them in the gathering of the clan and friends to extol the virtues of a loved one who has gone ahead of us. Cory may have only a tribe of kin, but she has the whole nation for friends—and I do not mean Facebook. If the country turns out to commiserate with the kin of someone who has done so much for it, what can you do? If all of to do-rule to keep physical vigil with someone who kept spiritual vigil with us in the hour of our death, what can Malacañang do?

The answer: Prevent people from attending a vigil, certainly not one for what the country considers even now a living hero. But even people who do not believe in God, or who do not know whether there is one or not. They too can always believe in the power of good and the goodness of one such like either.

You cannot cast out cops and police en masse gear to meet people who are making their way to the Manila Cathedral carrying candles to light their way in lieu of turning the darkness. For, cannot accuse a vigil, you cannot declare limits to how many people may wish to personally express their overpowering sense of bereavement, you cannot prevent people from lifting their voices to heaven asking God how many or on someone who has brought heaven's light to the world, have mercy on a nation that has not always bathed in it.

You cannot impose a curfew on a vigil.

That is not to speak of what would happen if—you know it is not a long way off—Cory is finally reunited with her husband in the arresting silence of heaven. I hate little doubt the crowds that will see her off. Once trolling in their eyes, their hearts burning with the magma of grief, will be bigger and more volcanic than the one that did to Ninoy. I have little doubt the men in barong and the women in dresses will be joined by the men in long sleeves and the women still-at-home making on luxe lawsuits, businessmen and farmer, executive and laborer, priest and soldier, equestrian and plebeian, rich and poor, men and whore, saint and sinner, charming, like Job, in anger and despair. "Please keep God, take us, take us together too."

I don't know that Malacañang began the rumor. I do know Malacañang will be the end of it.

E-mail: jaimiramirez@gmail.com

GMA awards three US senators

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WILL MEET with US President Barack Obama upon his invitation, the Sen Aaron leader is inclined by this new administration. After weighing in on the President's State of the Nation Address, our homegrown lead ers and political pundits are now busy contributing their bit to what they feel ought to be the agenda of the US President when he meets with Filipino leaders. Others are reminding Obama of the size of the Asian ethnic vote, especially the need to "comply with Principles of Democracy and respect for the inalienable rights," as thought he might be short of briefing by the US Embassy staff. But President Arroyo, being accused for their continuing contribution in helping advance human rights and restore democracy in the Philippines. In the case of the ailing Kennedy, he's also being cited for his concern for health care, or aging issues in America now.

* * *

It will be recalled that Senator Kerry of Massachusetts played a four-key but important role against the Marcos dictatorship and in support of the four-day Edsa Revolution. Senior Legar of Indiana, on the other hand, was instrumental in getting the elevator to let go, when his then senior adviser, "Cat and Cal chun, Mr. President." The Kennedy brothers have been staunch champions of human rights, and Ted Kennedy played a big role in strengthening the mission of US aid during the dictatorship. As this Edsa Revolution gathered steam in Manila, Filipino pro-democracy leaders in America, among them Habarcon and Godfrey Alvarez, held a "panelist falter" in front of the White House together with other sympathizers of the Nonoy Aquino Movement, to pressure the US government to let go of Marcos.

* * *

One of the most closely scrutinized part of the

(Continued on page A10)

Food sovereignty

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Cores P. Deyo

"WHY SHOULD WE PRIORITIZE THE PRODUCtion of corn to feed animals in Korea when we cannot even feed all the Filipino people?" asked Arne Glipa, food awareness of the Kaf Boro Pinoi Foundation (FPFI). Think about that, will ya?

A number of readers sent feedback on last week's column piece ("Global land grab, agricultural-ism") and expressed alarm. One came from a farmer who felt shame that foreign companies are coming in to grab our rice lands. Yes, it is a shame and in other developing countries in order to meet their needs for food and biofuel. Korea is not the only country doing that.

A Filipino working in an organic farm in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, whose speaker lame came from Alice Guatemala who belongs to the Task Force Food Sovereignty network. The TFOOD team tells you there is reason to watch over our farmlands but they fall into the hands of powerful foreigners. They have only short-term interest in here. We need to think that sovereignty was only about territorial authority of the political kind. Now we can see that it also has relationship to do with the food-sector table.

I first came across the term Raymundo's column:

"Thanks for your column piece 'Global land grab, agricultural-ism.' We really need to shed more light on that alarming trend of leasing large tracts of land to agri-business corporations for a term of anywhere from 25 to 99 years, specially since our farmers who will be more marginalized from land. This trend also poses a very serious threat to our food security and our environment.

"At the rate the country's agricultural land is being leased out to foreigners, the government may not even need Charter change to lift the prohibition on foreign ownership of land. Now that the lease could be up to 99 years, as in the case of the contract with Pacific Rim Global Holdings Inc. (a subsidiary of all Filipino, top-notch food, Rizon Farm, which is almost equivalent to a farmer's entire farming life. The means that the youth in the countryside of Dagupan, for in-

(Continued on page A10)

Shadow boxing

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO AVOID THE genuinely popular fate last—Marcos' Syndrome, the ultimate human group in her front of the Nation Address—not only out of egotistic, chaotic affection and admiration for the Pinoy pug, but because she wanted everyone to identify our country's prime Lightweight Champion with himself. Pinoy tending her (in her own mind, at least) the No. 1 pound-for-pound chief executive of the country and the champion of the 50s. I pound-for-pound boxer in the world.

To take the boxing analogy to its logical conclusion, perhaps we should ask ourselves what boxing champs could have taught the President by the time she delivered her SONA. Perhaps Muhammad Ali or Manny Pacquiao, for instance, could have told the President to stop trying to be clever and to stick to her best, or they simply say, it's time to go, goodbye, thank you, I love you, bye.

Such a statement was what people were expecting from the President when she addressed the nation and Congress.

It is remarkable that instead, she basically declared she was going to treat her potential successors as challengers. But worse of them is going to be the President herself. She wants to prove she can hold on to until the very last second of the very last minute of the very last hour of the very last day of her presidency over here to defend countries, a it? Not just because she supposedly stopped being "complacent" and "overconfident" on the dismissal the 2004 presidential.

Well, that, she also says people supposedly said to her, but that this her "list of incompetence" caused the dog, to run out of the ring. Here the referee is correct. If you accept her take on events, the title belongs to those who have been fired from her, have run down to the ring, and have taken her place. But then the gong at the referee knock open.

Now, I'm not a boxing fan, but I do know that the referee is the person who is supposed to make sure the fighters fight fair, and that the referee is the person who is supposed to make sure that the fighters fight fair, and that the referee is the person who is supposed to make sure that the fighters fight fair, and that the referee is the person who is supposed to make sure that

Fulfill prophetic mission: denounce, put an end to evil

LETTERS

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE EDITORIAL titled "Signal of corruption". (Inquirer, 07/28/09). I admit that I am no stand-in at hearing about accusations of corruption leveled against the Aquino administration without anyone being prosecuted and convicted. But this does not mean that I have given up and stopped crying out to the heavens for the reward of justice to fall upon this unjust administration. Never shall I be appeased, exploitative and deceit-like legacy is not only marked by plunder but also by the increasing number of human rights violations, like the abduction, torture and killing of political activists and journalists.

I believe that President Macapagal-Arroyo and her cohorts are accountable to the Filipino people.

During her nine years in the presidency, we have witnessed how her government suppressed freedoms, especially the freedom of those who are critical of her administration's anti-poor policies. Since the become president in 2001, more than 1,000 Filipinos—activists and ordinary citizens...have fallen victim of extrajudicial killings, or have been abducted or tortured. Still thousands of others never cease to suffer due to massive militarization in the countryside. The wrath/hate of the Nation Address of Ms. Arroyo also marked nine years of oppression and unconstitutionality.

As people of faith, we have a moral responsibility to denounce the evils in our times. Our God, through His prophets, denounced oppressive authorities, corrupt leaders, and the features and fallen of grace advocates. He calls us today to fulfill our prophetic mission, for as just he read to this administration's nine years of oppression, deceitfulness and greed. We cannot afford to just watch—and suffer—the life and dignity of our sisters and brothers being trampled on by the "incredible fiasco-type administration." Let us hold the devious administration accountable for massive human rights violations, electoral fraud, corruption and economic poverty.

—RICO GILBERT S. HILADO, T.Coats, InterFaith Justice and Peace Network (IFJPNet), Epiphanytown, (12 Annas St. Tres Manila, Quezon City

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An appeal to GSIS' Winston Garcia

AFTER WAITING FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S tardiness in releasing my claims to the widow of Fernando L. Flavier, FIRE Certificate of Membership No. 0162000496, former Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office division chief...He rendered 20 years of faithful service to the PCSO before his retirement on Nov. 1, 1996.

Last July 24, I received from the GSIS an unsigned Sun Certified Statement To Update Records, dated July 13, 2009, bearing the name of Josefina M. Godoy, officer II; Maria Agnes A. Dilanan, staff officer III; and Virginia C. Olivares, regional manager.

I cannot understand why I have to go through this ordeal of waiting two months for this claim. It was told the amount involved is merely P100,000. I first went to file my claim when I went to the GSIS office on May 7, 2009, the day following his burial. I was told that the GSIS only required the widow to submit two documents—her marriage certificate and (2) his death certificate—stamped with RSO certification. My marriage certificate was duly stamped by the RSO, but I was told that the RSO notification of his death certificate would take weeks and even months. So I was assigned to wait that long.

On July 8, 2009, exactly eight long weeks or two months after my husband's burial, the GSIS finally accepted my statement of FACTS and issued receipts for those documents to be issued on the following dates: (1) July 28, 2009 for husband's death certificate; (2) July 8, 2009 for true copy of marriage certificate on green-colored paper (I had been issued earlier a marriage certificate also stamped by the RSO but on a yellow-colored paper which had to be replaced because it was "old"); and (3) July 6, 2009 on "authentication" of the death certificate to be presented to the GSIS so that the GSIS can finally be convinced to release the remainder of the original claim (less the P65, which would take another 20 days of waiting from July 6 to July 28, 2009).

I immediately took steps to file GSIS, but it refused to accept the documents. I brought the matters directly to the attention of Mr. Garcia, but he refused to see me. I couldn't even see the photo maker of William Benamara, for the photo maker was not working from July 6 to July 24. (What's the matter—all GSIS photos under repair for months on end? So what will I do now with the non-existent Certificate of Claim? Is Josefina Godoy still the GSIS cashier? Is Agnes Dilanan still the GSIS cashier? Is Virginia Olivares still the GSIS cashier?

I am sick and bedridden because of a near ailment I presented a few weeks ago when I woke up in the morning with a bad headache and a stiff neck and I had to be called stretcher. I was told it usually follows a mild stroke. I am about to undergo a surgery now, which is estimated to cost me P35,000.

What should I do now? I am appealing for help from GSIS general manager Winston Garcia. I can be reached at GSIS member and I am now 73 years old.

—LESLIE PARAS,
(1) Salud St.
Lourdes Subdivision,
Novaliches, Quezon City

What's the purpose of GMA's US visit?

WHAT DO THE FILIPINOS SEE IN THE forthcoming trip of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Mexico on July 30?

Let us first consider that the Filipino people are taking the Arroyo administration to explain why we have been taking deeper in the quagmire of poverty these past nine years despite her claims of success in her economic programs. The fact is that more and more of our poor have been dying from sickness and hunger, apparently because foreign investors, more than the Filipino people, are benefiting from our economy.

GMA doesn't seem to have any answers as to why we suffer in our own country while foreigners enjoy them stay here. The question therefore is: Is the primary American to get instructions from President Barack Obama on how to cover up greed in leadership, which was allowed by both the Bush and Arroyo administrations? Wasn't the conspiracy evident in the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Philippines and the United States.

The description can no longer be disguised. The visit to the United States is therefore just an attempt by Ms. Arroyo to save herself from the wrath of the people. The Filipino people can no longer be deceived.

—LEONILO DELUCIA SOTO,
Las Piñas City

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Obama to lecture GMA on democracy

DURING HIS 2004 INAUGURAL ADDRESS, US Pres. John F. Kennedy issued a stern reminder to the would-hungry by saying that "those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended by inside."

Forty-eight years later, US Pres. Barack Obama expressed a similar doctrine, a most specific one, warning that "those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent ... are on the wrong side of history."

About six months after proclaiming that and other troubling President Macapagal-Arroyo several times, Obama suddenly invites her to the White House.

He believe he decided to meet the person he vociferously assailed not because he would be pleased to meet her, but to refresh her memory about what he said in his campaign address.

He believe that Mr. Obama had been informed that Mr. Arroyo is widely perceived to have assumed office through deceit and that she has been clinging to power through corruption and by silencing dissent viz., without question, wrong.

And certainly her opinionation would never announce even the leaders of Obama's democracy; neither would she tell even her closest aides if Obama excommunicated her in private.

He does as president as statehood and we believe that Obama will tell her to cut out on climate issues he's been engaged in. (Ellen...)

—Ramon Mayrga, GellilMayrga@aol.com

Danger lurks in 'road trees'

MY FAMILY HAS BEEN LIVING ALONG Marcos Highway in Pampanga for seven years now. We know that the highway has been the site of numerous accidents every other two or three months. A number of these were caused by drunk drivers. Some we have witnessed.

One of the most devastating accidents involved our neighbor's son whose SUV driver brought him out of the big truck less than a kilometer away from their house one dark night. The kid must have been only third year high school project with school ID midnight. He had driven his friend home and crashed into the tree on his way back.

A schoolmate of my son was killed while crossing the same highway. Two months ago, another accident involved the highway claimed the life of a grade school boy inside a jeepney on his way to a school outing.

I completely agree that the beautiful trees in our place offer us some benefits. It was only when I saw some of their being cut down that I remembered our neighbor's young son who died when the car he was driving smashed a tree; in fact, many places bear his cut tree still embedded in the middle of the highway.

Maybe, just maybe, when the roads are wider, the cars are fewer, and the drivers are more responsible, Marcos Highway will no longer claim so many lives as it has been doing for many years now.

—ROSARIO P. VIVAR, MD, MD,
rpvmd@yahoo.com

The past 10 years has brought about many changes, for which progress (and increase reliance) in the part of Philippines, and the state have become both beneficial and equally hazardous.

Across the NATION

Flooded homes await war evacuees

'... the war evacuees are raring to return home but will only find their villages heavily flooded ...'

By Edwin G. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—THE WAR evacuees in Central Mindanao can't go home just yet.

A week-long downpour has flooded low-lying areas in Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Cotabato City, preventing thousands of people displaced by fighting between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for almost a year from leaving the cramped evacuation sites.

They have been anticipating their return to their communities since last week, when the government and the MILF declared a halt in hostilities before the resumption of peace talks.

The floods that swept the region forced some 35,000 families to leave their homes and damaged some P20 million in rice and corn crops, officials said.

Replay

Police in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the Army soldiers of the 6th Infantry Division have been sent to help villagers in the flooded areas of Kabuntalan, Northern Kabuntalan, Sultan Kudarat, Datu Piang and Datu Odin Sinsuat towns in Maguindanao.

Ten of the city's 37 barangays have been underwater, a repeat of what happened about a year ago. Floodwaters from upstream of the Rio Grande de Mindanao and Tamontaka rivers, which traverse the city, end up in the villages before reaching the Moro Gulf.

The two rivers have swelled, inundating villages at the banks and displacing some 5,000 people, according to Jose Maralas, the city's disaster and relief coordinator.

Flowing floods

North Cotabato Gov. Jesus Sacdalan, said thousands of people in five border towns of Maguindanao and North Cotabato had also been displaced by flash floods. Most hit are Pigcawayan, Libungan, Midsayap, Pikit and parts of Aleosan, he said.

North Cotabato and Maguindanao are "twin basins" of the Allah River flowing from South Cotabato and the Rio Grande, which originates from the mountains of North Cotabato and Bukidnon.

Small cars and motorcycles could not pass through Pigcawayan and Libungan because portions of the Cotabato-Davao highway had been submerged.

Aman Bantilan, a resident of Libungan, North Cotabato, cried on Sunday morning when the water up with knee-deep floodwaters in her farm that washed away the family's newly harvested palay.

Overnight destruction

"Had I known it would rain hard the night before, I would have transported the crops to safer grounds," she said.

The rain overnight destroyed crops worth more the P300,000, she added.

Sacdalan had asked the provincial board to declare a state of calamity so that relief and emergency assistance could be extended to the flood victims.

In Maguindanao, provincial administrator Reuie Tato said more than 200 low-lying villages in towns surrounding the Liguasan marshland had been underwater since Sunday. These included South Kabuntalan, Northern Kabuntalan, Sultan Kudarat, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Talayan, Guindulungan, Datu Piang, Datu Saudi, Ampatuan, Shariff Aguak and Pagalungan.

"There never used to be conflict-affected areas," Tato said. Now that a ceasefire is in place, the war evacuees are "trying to return home but will only find their villages heavily flooded," he said.

ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan mobilized health and social welfare personnel to oversee the rehabilitation of the flood victims who have moved to public school grounds and houses of their relatives.

Ampatuan, in a text message to reporters, said he had authorized his cabinet secretary to procure relief supplies for distribution.

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A POLICEMAN stands guard outside an evacuation camp in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao on July 28 while officials of the European Commission visit people displaced by fighting between Moro guerrillas and government soldiers and who sought shelter in the camp. (AP/Bullit Marquez)

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DSWD stops trafficking of 145 minors

By Vicente Labao
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—Authorities said they rescued 145 persons, mostly minors, from being trafficked or two days to transiently in Aklan, Samar days the start of the year.

Myrna Tan, Allen social welfare and development officer, said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) intercepted 119 minors and 26 young adults who were being trafficked at the terminals.

At least 123 of them were women, according to Tan.

Tan said the second minors and young adults, with ages ranging from 13 to 26, were intercepted in their way being brought to Metro Manila in buses and cars.

Many of those rescued were from Northern Samar.

Edu and Luis Manzano, proud SSS members
Ayos ang SSS membership, secured ang benefits
Like Father, Like Son
Ang SSS, Kabalikat Natin

5 kidnap suspects killed in clash with cops

4 are discharged or Awol soldiers, say PNP probers

By Gabriel Cardenas, Inquirer Northern Luzon and Tarra Quismundo in Manila

FOUR FORMER SOLDIERS AND one alleged accomplice were killed in a clash with policemen in Dagupan City early yesterday as the group purportedly conducted surveillance on their next kidnap target, police said.

The Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response Force said in a report that the suspects provoked police and military agents into a 15-minute gunfight at around 1 a.m. yesterday.

Killed were Cpl Elmer Ulanday and Pfc Glenn Ilao, both assigned (about without leave) in February 2004 and May 2000, discharged soldiers Alfe Jhon Martinez (2003) and Cpl Joey Tindugan (2007), and one Edgar Estrella.

Next victim

Police and agents from the Philippine Army's Intelligence Security Group and the military's Joint Special Operations Group, had been monitoring the group since May and found their van "casing" a possible victim on the Dagupan-Urdaneta Road (part of Highway 3).

Police and military had received an intelligence report that soldiers on Awol or were discharged "are planning to kidnap a wealthy businessman either in Dagupan City or San Fabian, Pangasinan," Pante said in a confidential report.

Pante said the group decided to pull out of their surveillance "sensing the presence of PNP operatives."

Amid a chase with police, the group found themselves locked in a side police checkpoint, Pante said.

Record

"When they noticed the police and military team a few meters ahead, they suddenly stopped their car, alighted and engaged the team in a running gun battle," said Senior Insp. Ingnai Jalmes, team chief, in his report.

Pante said the group was behind kidnap attempts in Dagupan in October 2007 and Lingayen in July 2006, and three robberies cases in San Fabian in June and two subscriber in Santa Barbara last month.

Recovered from the suspects were several firearms, including a .22 cal. Magnum revolver, a .45 cal. submachine gun, one .45 cal. pistol and two .38 cal. revolvers.

Earlier this month, seven kidnap suspects were killed in operations in Laguna and Cavite after police rescued their Chinese employer victim.

Supt. Luis Montano Nyssen Jr., Dagupan police chief, said the group's kin was interrogated by the police as the rescue unit of the Dewitt Patrol Larao Band at 12:30 a.m.

The policemen had just received an alert from their unit in the Dangalanan police station.

Nyssen said the group opened fire as the van approached the police blockade in Dorongan Lucao.

Active service

He said police had confirmed that Ilao, a resident of Urdaneta City, was still in active service. The three others—Ulanday, Martinez and Tindugan—had been discharged from the military service but still classified as active.

"We believe that they are either on Awol or discharged because that is how we know them, that the group is composed of former soldiers who are either discharged or on Awol," Chief Insp. Ramon Galas, Bayombong provincial director, said.

The fifth member of the group, Estrella, was identified through his barangay ID issued in Caloocan City.

Nyssen said Estrella's relatives from San Fabian had claimed his body.

He said the van that the group used was stolen at 9 a.m. on Tuesday in front of a restaurant in Dagupan. Its owner, Edwin Andres, of Barangay Tebag in Lingayen town, had reported the theft to police.

OPEN AIR
A jogger goes past manicured grass lawns in Bagong Ilog which ensures an adequate supply of water for the city's growing population. The trees also help reduce the effects of pollution, a growing problem in the densest capital.
ELVIN KEITH CRUZ/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

NEWSBRIEFS

BATANGAS CITY

PIM for Recto

THE FORMER governor of Batangas, who was injured in an assassination attempt in 2006, offered a P2.5-million reward for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators of the ambush-slaying of Nasugbu Vice Mayor Dencio Ilustre and three others who were killed in the attack.

Ferdinand Tapanes, lawyer of former governor Armando Sanchez, said in a press conference and photo session that Pat PM offered his reward for the arrest of Ricky Recto, former Batangas vice governor, and P500,000 each to suspects Christopher Belmonte, Christina Belmonte and Belma Belmonte.

Pictures of the four will be posted in Batangas and elsewhere, Tapanes said.

Judge Rodan Galvez, of the Balayan City Regional Trial Court, issued a warrant of arrest for Recto on Monday.

The warrant was brought to Recto's house in Green Meadows, Quezon City, Wednesday to contact Recto were futile.

Charged with the four counts of murder, Sen. Ralph Recto, Lt. Col. Hilarion Santos and seven unidentified men. Ely and Santos pleaded innocent on Monday.

Sanchez, mentioned in a Senate hearing as a financier of the illegal numbers game "Jueteng," suffered burns during the attack. His bodyguard and driver were killed when a bomb ripped through their Nissan Patrol at the provincial capitol in June 2006.

The Department of Justice had recommended the filing of murder and attempted murder charges against Recto and his co-accused, saying they conspired to have Sanchez killed.

Recto and Sanchez were once allies until they had a falling out over what Recto said is participation in mismanagement of Batangas under Sanchez's boss. **Marvin Feliz Locsin, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Tarra Quismundo in Manila**

SAN PEDRO, Laguna

Town sets lei record

THE GUINNESS World Records (GWR) has confirmed that San Pedro's 2.1-km sampaguita garland constructed to set a new record when the Sampaguita Festival kicked off.

A June 26 letter from Lara Foster, GWR's Records Management Team, said the sampaguita garland of 1,020 feet broke the old record of 1,000 feet set by Honolulu in May 2006.

The 10-strand-thick leis was already laid aside from other displays as part of the town's 10-day Fiesta Sampaguita last February.

"Credit goes not to one person but to one organization, but to all citizens of San Pedro," said Mayor Calixto Catapusan in a statement.

The title, he added, "upholds San Pedro as the Sampaguita capital of the Philippines." **Marvin F. Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

BACOLOD CITY

Negros trade fair

THE NEGROS Trade Fair, the Philippines' longest-running provincially organized Trade Fair in Metro Manila, will move to another dimension more when it makes available the Negros-made products through its online store.

Mary Anne Cohenmann, Association of Negros Producers president, said the online store at www.bestofnegrosbacolod.com will accept orders immediately when exhibit of Negros products from Sept. 11-15 at the Pomerland Tent in Makati City. **Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas**

SAN PABLO CITY

Dengue watch

AS OF 6:30 last February 4 (P.191) cases remains a concern for health officials here. They urged residents to brace for dengue fever, said Dr. Ida Rivera, city health officer.

As of July 21, the dengue consequences taken 84 residents & and the number was expected to rise in the coming days, Rivera said.

The report led by Barangay San Francisco (Dalahoy, which had 15 cases, he added. **Rainah G. Pante, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

Immigration agents hold 28 Koreans for illegal school

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO... The Bureau of Immigration in Clark Freeport turned over to its local office in Manila at least seven Korean executives and 20 Korean children that its agents raided in Mexico, Pampanga, on Monday.

Bureau chief Marcelo Manalo said he had recommended to Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan the filing of charges against Kim Seung Woo and Kang Sung Rak for working in the Philippines without permits and for operating a language school without accreditation from the Bureau and Department of Education.

Manalo said the Koreans (children, who are 9 to 16 years old) should be ordered to leave the country and their tourist visas revoked.

They were taking up English lessons at the Vibe Bale Ri Subic Learning Center, he added that Kim and Kang stayed at Room 8 and Log Cabin in Subic.

The children, he said, failed to present passport for verification and did not have special study permits.

Kim is a holder of a special Subic working visa but his business is in Mexico, which is outside the Subic Freeport in Zambales, Manalo said.

Kang, on the other hand, arrived in the Philippines on July 18 using a tourist visa.

Kim on Monday ill officers in Clark's Bicutan Mississippi to request exit passport for the Bicutan and did not have special study permits.

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Manalo said the 13 men were victims of illegal recruitment since they had no clearance to work abroad from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

They were promised jobs as fishermen and were to a fishing boat in Malaysia. They said they were invited by one Abdul Malik Bin Abdul Wahab, a Malaysian, to work in that country.

The members of Koreans entering the Philippines has grown in recent years. Most have set up businesses in highly urbanized areas and many have enrolled in different Philippine schools. **Pamela Dogias, Inquirer Central Luzon**

Sona misses veggie highway plagued by graft

BAGUIO CITY—THE INSUFFICIENCY of a major Cordillera highway that is used to transport vegetables to Metro Manila is one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's unfulfilled promises that she made in previous State of the Nation Addresses (Sona).

Documents showed that the Commission on Audit (COA) had started an investigation of the delayed modernization of the 140-km Halsema Highway in light of reports from a local civic group called the Volunteers Against Corruption (VAC) and local chapter of the Confederation of Truckers Associations Philippines that primarily project.

Photographer Eugene S. Asis of the Presidential Management Staff (PMS), and COA Chief Reynaldo Villar authorized the investigation as early as June to unravel the issues preventing the highway's completion, a COA document showed.

Inspectory

Thomas Killip, provincial assistant on Cordillera affairs, and the COA regional office would inspect the NE President section of the highway on Friday and Saturday.

Jasper Dumalipot, VAC spokesperson, said his group was not surprised that Ms Arroyo did not mention the Halsema Highway in her from on Monday, unlike her previous speeches.

Ms Arroyo also said the reason for modernization of the road because better being the late President Ferdinand Marcos had initiated the building of the highway.

Dumalipot said Killip, the PMS and from Secretary Cesar Bernardo had received an independent status evaluation of Halsema from the NAC, the Local Action Development Council (LACC) of the Catholic Diocese of Boston (Mt. Province) and Lagawe (Ifugao), and the Episcopal Diocese of Kalinga.

Halsema stretches from La Trinidad town in Benguet to Mt. Province and is the source

A SECTION of the Halsema Highway, which continues to be in disrepair as a result of graft. Officials have ordered an investigation, but the delay has become too costly
LEONARDO ESPINOSA/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

lowers of Benguet in Ifugao.

Initial cost: P1B

Asis Ngolab, Cordillera director of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said the first 64-km section was the government P1 billion when it upgraded the highway from La Trinidad to Mankayan in Benguet, Mt. Province, in March 2000.

Rehabilitation of the 31-km stretch from Mount Data to Bontoc in Mt. Province capital of Bontoc and the 45-km section from Bontoc to Banaue is ongoing and is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

The highway has since been expanded to link Mt. Province and Ifugao with tollings, with up to P5.5 billion in government allocations.

"It is the section leading to Kalinga-Apayao that needs leading to Tuguegarao City in Cagayan where there are problems because the highway would affect private lands. Ifugao (father in-work-calendar) have awarded 15 percent to some stretches to the Cordillera Regional Development Council (RDC), conducted infrastructure, monitoring and advisory committee to deal with [illegible] problems," Ngolab said. Ifugao Governor Eugenio Jacob Dulawan Lacon

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bautista
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

400-year-old church gets makeover

By Gerald Gene R. Quesabin
Santa Cruz, Marinduque

FOUR CENTURIES ago, it was just a simple structure made of bamboo, wood and leaves of nipa and anahaw. Now, the Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) Church is a gargantuan showcase of brick and adobe in the heart of bustling Santa Cruz, the largest town in Marinduque.

Churchgoers and visitors are awed with the makeover, initiated by the parish priest and devotees in 2008 as part of the celebration of 400 years of evangelization in Santa Cruz this year.

"The Christian missionaries pursued local evangelization in step with designing and building churches as centers of their missionary work, consistent with laying out the town's plan," local historian Hindo Iturralde says.

The churches "tired the birth" of the towns, Asuncion says, becoming "rich sources of information about the province's and our people's history." Those, he adds, are the "legacy" of their predecessors and "we must make them prouder still."

THE "IMPROVED" Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) Church, one of the oldest churches in Marinduque.

THE ALTARS, repainted and restored to their grandeur.

Among oldest structures

The Santa Cruz Church is one of the oldest existing structures on the island's province, serving as a link between the past and the present. Its architecture has a touch of the Renaissance, Baroque style, Asuncion says.

In his coffee-table book, "Marinduque: The Heart of the Philippines," Asuncion says the church conforms to a classical form, with the longitudinal axis or nave running basilica pattern and proportional axis or nave running from the concerned main door-way to the altar at the opposite end.

Perhaps, he says, the Jesuit missionaries wanted the church structure to relate closely to the town's main thrust, the designers opted for the eradicum inside of the basilica leaning toward the Latin cross variation (the nave forming a longer arm) rather than the Greek cross alternative (arms of equal length), he notes.

Fr. Jovie Grimaldo, the parish priest, clarifies that no renovations were made on the church. "We simply made improvements on the existing state of the church. We are aware that we have to preserve the integrity of this historical structure," he says.

Historical and cultural conservationists have consistently claim that some people, in an overzealous drive or impress a structure's "magnificence," do more harm than good. They could make "small but irreversible" changes that through the years, may completely change the essence and spirit of the structures, and everything they represent.

"We cannot easily disregard the architectural and socio-cultural significance that they (old churches) provide. They shaped our identity. Old churches just turn history, returning their worth with the passing of years," Asuncion says.

P4-M budget

According to Father Grimaldo, almost P4 million was spent for the improvement of the Santa Cruz Church. The donated funds came from a campaign launched by the priest and the Parish Pastoral Council, among residents, including those who have moved abroad, and other donors and partakers.

Today, the church never ceases to draw good impressions.

On the ceiling of the octagonal dome are scenes from the passion of Christ, painted painstakingly in panels by artists from Betangan. At the center is a dove, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, surrounded by angels descending to earth from heaven.

The dome, Grimaldo explains, depicts the meeting of man and God.

"Intuitive" or altars have been repainted and fitted with gold leafs as gold ait-mirror foils to bring back their grandeur and highlight the iconic figures and sculptures of saints and biblical personalities. Signed fibers from Boac, Buenavista, were blood to preserve the longevity of the altars.

"Gold leafs" also adorn the canopied pulpit, with an intricate carving on its panel.

All benches have been repainted.

A new set of audiovisual equipment and speakers has been installed. Two closed-circuit television cameras and three TV sets to capture spots inside the church and on the pews provide full view of the officiating priest.

Outside are concrete and landscaped grounds. The old museum was replaced with one filled with modern amenities.

Quadricentennial

On May 1-3, the church and the municipal government collaborated to hold the quadricentennial activities, coinciding with Santa Cruz's fiesta.

"We should be glad that we worked together to witness and experience the celebration of the 400 years of evangelization of Santa Cruz. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event," said Dr. Tito Bejano, chair of the celebration committee.

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, archbishop of Cebu and celebrant of the quadricentennial Mass, urged the residents to continue the spiritual legacy of those who entered the faith four centuries ago.

"For 400 years, our ancestors planted and grew the faith, and now we are reaping the fruits of their efforts. Let us continue the legacy that they left by loving and helping one another, especially those who need us most," Vidal said.

A shop of Paete culture, arts

By Karen Lapitan
Paete, Laguna

A FORMER PRODUCTION designer of mainstream television programs and movies has accumulated so many props for the past 17 years that his apartment could no longer accommodate them.

Jino Buhay III, thought of opening a shop where he could display and sell some from his designs and works. But he realized that there was much more to heave to starting up the business.

"My mother has inspired me to come up with something that could help me show others how rich Paete is in terms of artistry. It is also an opportunity to showcase our other businesses," said Buhay, who comes from a family who has been producing "bahay" (wooden shoes) since the Japanese occupation.

In 1993, Buhay put up Ang Buhay at Hugo in Paete along J. V. Quezada Street, a heritage shop which mainly displays the family's wooden shoes and some old props. The center also offers wood and metallic carvings, papier-mâché, shells and other items that may interest clients.

Wide network

As someone who had worked in the entertainment mainstream, Buhay has developed many contacts who helped him handle the business. Directors and producers, though, still give him projects occasionally.

Often, Buhay is commissioned to design and provide props for festivals, malls, mainstream and independent films.

He stopped working as a full-time designer when he felt that it was not living and he wanted to do something else. Also, the projects coming his way slowed down.

When he put in P150,000 for his new endeavor, Buhay said he was unsure how the shop would turn out but decided to give it a go, knowing that his passion would help him maintain it.

He first displayed masks, papier-mâché and wooden carvings, and other props. Now, the store is packed with more items for the needs and wants of potential clients.

Since he has no budget for advertisement, Buhay depends on referrals from clients, directors and producers.

Struggle

Keeping the shop afloat is a struggle, he emphasized. "This kind of business is a concession of the (economic) crisis, but my passion has kept me going for the past 16 years."

He acknowledges that he does not expect much in terms of profit. "If I am just hungry for profit, then this shop should have been closed a few years after I have started it," he said.

But Buhay considers priceless the appreciation of people visiting the shop.

It has been a favorite haunt for high school and college students who travel to learn about Paete's culture and arts.

"It is really rewarding to know that those students who came here would come back when they need something that we offer, even if they first came without buying something," Buhay said.

Ang Buhay in Hugo in Paete has kept the prices of its products for the past four years despite increasing costs of raw materials.

Training ground

It has also helped groups that aim to hone the talents of young artists in acting, singing, dancing and the visual arts. The Philippinesia and the Teatro Bumbay have emerged from the shop's marketing and promotional push.

"My friends and I were thinking of how we can invite people to come into my shop, and we thought of having some performances here from time to time. Eventually, we came up with two groups of artists," Buhay said.

Buhay is also proud that many of his former employees now have more stable jobs, while others have left abroad for greener pastures.

"My shop served as their training ground. Most of them learned and acquired their skills here," he said.

He has been invited by the United States to give a talk about the cultural heritage of Paete.

"The time I quit my mainstream job, my close friends thought I would end up unemployed. But I have proven them wrong as I have remained confused in running my business for more than a decade," Buhay said.

In The Name Of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BASILAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Provincial Capitol Bldg., Isabela City, Basilan Province

July 28, 2009

KGG. PANGULO GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
Pangulo ng Pilipinas
Malacanang Palace
Manila

Minamahal na Pangulo:

Mabuhay kal

Nais ko ipabatid ang aking taos pusong suporta sa matagumpay na **"SONA 2009"** na ginanap sa kongreso. Ako, sampu na aking pamunuan, ay nananalig sa iyong kakayahan, katapatan at sinseridad sa pagganap sa iyong tungkulin bilang Pangulo ng Pilipinas.

Ako ay personal na naniniwala na patuloy mong palalaganapin ang kapayapaan at kaunlaran sa ating bansa. Makakaasa ka na ang aking administrasyon kasama ang aking buong probinsiya ay nasa likod mo. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

Gumagalang,

GOVERNOR JUM I. AKBAR

Protests dog GMA trip; foes write letter

From page A1

"We joined all freedom-loving peoples of the world who rendered tribute when you declared that 'those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent ... are on the wrong side of history.'

"So your meeting with Mr. Soetoro, it may serve you well to be mindful of Mr. Soetoro's legacy of corruption, outright denial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, bribery, election cheating, among others.

"The Filipino people also yearn for change from the vicissitudes of hope. Insistence and the cause of decadence that Mr. Soetoro represents.

"In your meeting with Mr. Soetoro, we feel confident that you will make clear to her that a government that does not comply with Principles of Democracy and respect for human rights cannot have the approval and support of your administration.

"We implore you, Mr. President, to insist hope and be an instrument of change. We echo the sentiments of the long-suffering Filipino people," the letter said.

'Height of political senility'

Maintaining behind in the letter to Obama.

"Every time matters of that nature come from the statements of the President, you could expect that the intervention is really just to boost-itch the President," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said separately.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde described the letters as "the height of political sensitivity."

Former President Fidel Ramos, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez also criticized Arroyo's meeting with Obama.

Ramos said Arroyo should not take up ways to advance the peace process in Mindanao with Obama, whose country has taken the "soft" track by helping build schools, roads and bridges through development assistance.

"The other issues are global economic crisis and climate change, according to Ms Arroyo.

JOY‑FILLED President Arroyo holds a 6-month baby girl during issuance of Assignment Orders for the new police officers for Sta. Rita and the conversion of Sta. Rita to the municipal government to the local police force and 48 barangay peace and order committees. All these a few hours before her trip to Armenia.

Asia," she said, describing the United States as the Philippines' strongest ally.

"Finally, I will convey our deep appreciation for the payment of $130 million by the US for Philippine veterans of World War II. This long overdue recognition will go a long way in rewarding the patriotic Filipinos who fought side by side with Americans, under US command, during the historic days of World War II," she said.

Chartered PAL

Ms Arroyo flew on a Philippine Airlines commercial flight at 7 p.m. to Vancouver, Canada, where she will board a chartered PAL flight to Washington.

Her delegation included her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, and key, Executive Sec. Eduardo "Ed" Arroyo, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, and reportedly 20 lawmakers led by Rep. Mikee Romero of Bantayan and Finance Speaker Prospero Nograles.

Also in the party were Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, Labor Secretary Marianito Roque, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and Chair Susan Ople of the Movement for Filipinos Abroad (Migrante) Foundation.

Ms Arroyo designated Vice President Noli de Castro as caretaker while she was away.

'Let us not destroy the honor'

Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo dismissed opposition suggestions that Obama would tackle his mother or be her dismal human rights record.

He said that the Obama Institutes was a "big bonus to our country."

"Let us not destroy that honor," Mikey Arroyo said, pointing out that Ms Arroyo was the first leader in Southeast Asia to be invited by the new administration in the White House.

He also shrugged off talk that his mother was undone on whether the world step down at the end of her term in her frame of the Senior Address (State) on Monday. "There will be a new president in 2010," he said.

Gen. Rodolfo Biazon said on a news forum that his thought Obama had not set as much as "invited" Ms Arroyo as "mainstream" but to explain certain issues like political killings and human rights violations in the Philippines.

"It's unbecoming for a government, especially of a war ally, to call the chief executive of a republic and ask the chief executive to explain and be accountable for the issues of corruption, human rights violations, disappearances and political killings," Biazon said.

'Raw deal'

Migrante International, an alliance of overseas Filipinos, said in a statement that the Obama-Arroyo talks could be "another raw deal in the making."

It said in a statement that the United States would support Ms Arroyo's continued stay in power to prime minister through Charter change in exchange for her support of US business interests, the coming Asean agreement and the global war on terror. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, DJ Yap, Jeremiah Antiporda and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

World Press Photo exhibit at SM malls

THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS provides the starkest images as the internationally acclaimed World Press Photo Exhibit returns to Manila next month.

The exhibit runs from Aug. 1 to 23 at three SM malls, featuring 196 photographs by eleven among entries from 124 countries. A total of 5,508 photographers entered this year's contest.

It opens at The Podium (Aug. 1-16), then moves to The Block at SM City North Edsa (Aug. 9-14), and then to the SM Mall of Asia (Aug. 15-23). Viewing is free of charge.

At the center of the exhibition is Anthony Suau's wrenching black-and-white shot capturing the impact of the global economic meltdown on ordinary lives.

It shows a detective inspecting a foreclosed home in Cleveland, Ohio, following the eviction of its residents. He cautiously enters the premises with pistol drawn, since many foreclosed homes usually harbor drug addicts and vagrants.

Mary Ann Golez, chair of the jury that picked this year's winners, said the strength of Suau's photo lay in its fusion of "opposites."

"It's a double entendre. It looks like a classic conflict photograph, but it is simply (about) the evolution of people through times following foreclosure," said Golez, head of the panel that picked the best shots in 30 categories.

'New kind of war'

"The jury agreed that great journalistic photography persists interest—as this photograph does. The image is an example of: A new kind of war, a war of economics, has arrived to invade our lives and our homes," she added.

The Philippine exhibit is a joint partnership of the Konrad Adenauer Asia Center for Journalism at Ateneo de Manila University, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Goethe-Institut, The Podium, SM City North Edsa, and SM Mall of Asia.

World Press Photo was founded in Amsterdam in 1955. Its main objective is to support and promote international quality the work of professional press photographers.

Over the years, WPP has evolved into an independent platform for journalism and the free exchange of information.

Gloria makes 20th sortie to 2nd district, Pampanga

From page A1

ga yesterday to inaugurate water systems, based were thrown to 60 of the 440 schoolchildren and inspect the dredging of creeks.

Her latest trip to her home province—the 20th since February—coincided as the speculation that she will run for a congressional seat representing Pampanga's second district after her term expires next year.

Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, Eddie Panlilio, the priest-turned-politician who defeated two sitting allies for the capitol, has openly joined the growing guns.

Delegate rites to locals

"Having no clear terms if she will really step down next year, it's possible that she will really run [in Pampanga representative]," Panlilio said.

Having no part in Ms Arroyo's itinerary, Panlilio was at San Fernando City Hall when reached by the Inquirer.

"The inauguration and inspection of projects in the province can be delegated to local governments, especially those [newly] having the people transfer about his plans," the governor added.

In Manila, Aldaynes Rep. Philiben Bello said people should take with "two grains of salt" assertions made by Bondoc's camp that Arroyo will step down from office next year.

Bello recalled that Ms Arroyo had declared she would not run for president in 2004 but later changed her mind.

'Lie for mother'

Representative Arroyo earlier insisted that his mother would be having her office in 2010, and, in exasperation, wondered how many times she had to say it for people to believe her.

Bello countered: "I guess if she was my mother, I'd do the same thing. I would lie for my mother."

"Now, there was even hint of a pronouncement: that she would step down from office," the party-list congressman said, referring to the President's 9th State of the Nation Address (Sona) delivered on Monday.

The July 27 Sona was supposed to be Ms Arroyo's last, but

PRESIDENT Arroyo receives departure honors at Nala Terminal 2 in Pasay City shortly before departing for Washington via Vancouver—where she another delegation will take a chartered flight to San Francisco.

it made no clear declaration that she would be relinquishing power to a successor on June 30, 2010.

The following day, First Secretary Cerge Remonde assured that the focus was Ms Arroyo's "flying valedictory as the purposes to leave office," and that the President had her "own style of saying things."

'She looks tired'

Ms Arroyo yesterday led the groundbreaking rites for two water systems in Sta. Rita town—one in Barangay Dila-Dila that cost P18 million and the other in Barangay Santa Ursula, worth P5 million.

The projects will benefit 3,000 households, according to Antonio Magtibay, president of the Sta. Rita Water works.

"Lapit yong mapagod (She looks tired)," a man among the crowd in Dila-Dila said upon spotting the visiting VIP who came in red pants and blouse.

It was Ms Arroyo's third visit to Sta. Rita this year, said Mayor Yolanda Peralta.

Guns before kids

In Barangay Sto. Monica, Ms Arroyo turned over 10 .45 cal. pistols to the town's police station and 10 shotguns to as many barangays.

The guns were distributed in front of some 1,000 elementary school students.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said the visit was part of Ms Arroyo's promise to continue working after she delivered her Sona on Monday.

"This visit of our President is one of the many tasks she has to fulfill before her term ends in 2010," Fajardo said.

In Barangay San Agustin, Mr Arroyo inspected the cleanup of the village creek through the help of out-of-school youths who were paid by the government.

Erap starts shoot of comeback movie in bed with Ai-ai

From page A1

be in San Juan, Estrada's hometown and where his son, JV, is the mayor.

Tentatively titled "Ang Tanging Ina" (Your Only Dad), the movie is patterned after the Hollywood family comedy "Mother of the Bride," which starred Steve Martin.

Ailing Dionisia

He has Ai-ai will play Estrada's wife, while Eric Quizon plays the role of their daughter.

Gonzaga's love interest will be played by Sam Milby, who will have Ailing Dionisia, mother of boxing champ Manny Dionisia, playing the role of Milby's mother.

The comedy is about a middle driver trying to deal with his daughter's plan to marry her Filipino-American boyfriend, according to Estrada's spokesperson Mongsot Salcedo.

"He really thinks that the poor, who are already suffering, should not be made to cry over more in the movies," Salcedo said. "He wants to make them happy, even if only briefly."

Underdog

Estrada, 72, built his political career as a champion of the poor, largely based on his movie roles as an underdog. He rose from town mayor to senator to vice president before winning the presidency.

He stepped down amid massive protests in 2001 after serving only half of his six-year term. He was convicted of "plunder" in September 2007 but was immediately granted a pardon by his successor, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

COMEBACKING Ex-President Erap sets is not only coming back to the political arena but to the big screen with his first film, a comedy with Ai-ai de las Alas. Pinag-usapan two days ahead are [illegible] and not disciplined in the first place.

Estrada has said that he will consider running for president again next year and that the constitutional ban on a second term does not apply to him.

Love scenes private

In past interviews, Estrada had expressed excitement about returning up with De las Alas, whom he described as a "Modelwater comedienne."

"It's an honor to be in a movie with him," Estrada said.

Asked by said Ai-ai Alas will be playing husband and wife, there will be love scenes, according to Estrada.

"But the love scenes of our past were always private, di ba?" he told the reporters with a laugh.

Should there be any bed scenes, it's really for family entertainment," Estrada said, laughing.

He said he decided to make a movie because he needed to "I have to work, that's why I have to do a movie," he said.

'Comeback' film

With his trademark moustache, pompadour and wristband, Estrada is a Filipino movie Hall of Famer, having starred in more than 100 films.

Estrada's last movie, "Sa Kuko ng Agila (In the Eagle's Claws)"—made in 1989 while he was a senator—portrays him as another middle driver who opposes US military bases in the Philippines.

"This is like his comeback film," Salcedo said of the new project. "He hasn't done a movie in so long."

Salcedo said Estrada had scheduled at least one month for the shooting of the movie, which will be shown in September or October. He said he hoped that he the movie would be cleared to change.

Directed by Mona Dionisio, the upcoming film is produced by Star Cinema. With a report from AP

Informatics roars to 6th win, whips New Era

By Mari Anthony Rosca

INFORMATICS SOLIDIFIED ITS STATUS as tournament dark horse with a 80-78 crushing of New Era for its sixth straight win yesterday in the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Nasecu) basketball tournament at the SM Mall.

Noble 6-foot-3 center/forward Mark Angelo Montemayor drilled in 21 points and Mario Leonido added 20 points as Informatics soared to a commanding 39-9 lead in the end of the first quarter.

The Hunters moved within nine wins after their third quarter but Informatics stepped up its game to send their rivals to their fourth straight loss.

In other games, AMA Computer, the 2005 champion, trounced Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasay, 77-56; while Jose Rizal University ripped Technological University of the Philippines, 82-64.

The AMA Titans improved to 3-3 to land the 4-1 mark of STI. The FLP Eagles fell to their fifth loss in six games while the Olivarez Hunters absorbed a sixth straight defeat.

Burger King picking Aguilar

By Hiyas B. Castillo

WITH TRISTIANI'S DEPUTY HEAD Coach Tony Golez and other getting a horde of "very tempting offers," Burger King has decided to make the 6-foot-9 Ateneo de Manila Aguilar the No. 1 pick in Sunday's PBA Draft.

"Yes, as of today, we're going for Aguilar (as the No. 1 pick)," said team managers and board representatives Lito Alfonso yesterday.

"I had my reservations (about Aguilar) and I thought that he would be a 'project,'" Alfonso added. "But after getting a report from coach Yeng, and after all those pony offers from other teams, you can bet, we appreciate the value of Japeth now."

The Whoppers had earlier shipped Jayjay Suaybaguio to San Miguel for Blue Eagle Ren-Ren Ritualo and future draft considerations, but Alfonso said they're keeping Gary David despite his request to join another team.

Pargas immediately found his way back to Quezondale after the Golden Abs gave up their first and second round picks in next year's Draft.

A member of teams have expressed willingness to get Aguilar including Talk 'N Text, which is proposed to go to great lengths to acquire the former Western Kentucky University mainstay.

"Whatever we are prepared to do, let's keep it confidential at the moment," Talk 'N Text board representative Bobby Yanga was told by a separate phone interview yesterday. "But if you're asking me if we want Japeth, yes we do."

Meanwhile, Tony Chua, the former chair and Rondez Bull's representative on the league's board, yesterday assured his fellow team-lister that his franchise is not up for sale.

In another PBA development, Rain or Shine unloaded three point threat Bob Sura tonight and recruited ex-Ateneo Blue Eagle Jeff Chan and versatile Mike Hrabak.

Eagles wary vs Falcons

Archers battle Bulldogs

By Jasmine W. Paya

DESPITE THE HEAVY THINGS THAT had been said of season's early UAAP embarrassment, coach Sauro Olivo is confident Ateneo Blue Eagles will recover their old confidence.

"It's a rude awakening," said Olivo of the stunning 66-58 beating loss the all-but-dwelling University of the Philippines slapped on the defending champions.

"But it (loss) is not the end. It's not that it good or is one, dealing with adversities and joys. being able to respond when others put us down. People have been putting us down a lot the past days."

Olivo expects his Blue Eagles to get their bearings against Ateneo Falcons in the men's basketball tournament at 4 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We're looking to connect and play hard every game," said Olivo. "We can't take the lower teams for granted, any team can beat us if we don't come out with energy and if we don't play good defense."

The Green Archers try to maintain their climb out of 0-2 hole when they tangle with the National U Bulldogs earlier at 2 p.m.

After losing two games, we didn't press the panic button," said coach Franz Pumaren as the Archers hope to stretch their winning streak to three.

The bewildering coach in the Maroons opposed the Eagles' vulnerability were offer little conquest of tournament favorite for Eastern University, University of the East and University of Santo Tomas.

And it's the reverse situation—led by reigning MVP Rabeh Al-Hussaini, Manny Basilio and Ryan Buenafe—remain wary of an Ateneo side lofting for a win after dropping three games by just an average of 1.7 points.

"They're pretty good," said Black of the Falcons, whose 1-3 record belies the aggressive performances of guards Lester Alvarez, Jerish Galinde and big men Jose Collins, Mike Salmento and rookie Eric Centeno.

"The games that they've lost they could have won. I've watched all their games and they're well coached. They're disciplined team."

Pumaren also knows better than to take the Bulldogs lightly. "All the teams are very dangerous. We're not a dominant team. We don't have the luxury to relax."

EVERYBODY'S hands go up as the air up players from La Salle and Ateneo are going up on each other to rebound/play during their game last Sunday. The La Salle Green Archers defeated the Falcons, 64-63, in overtime. EDDIE MORALES

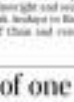
A case of one world crown too many?

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL FILIPINOS boxing fans, regardless of age and creed, to come to the end of promoters who hoodwink them.

Let's all join hands and once more focus himself.

While there's still time, let's march to Juan Manny Pacquiao's forthcoming bout with Miguel Cotto officially declared a world welter weight champ today.

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

Only, please,

What you just said was the first part of confusion originally caused by the unwarranted contract executed by the current Michael Markey when he called out Agbi fans to double team/bash to death up.

Pilot sparked Ms Morley's indignation was an unbelievable quote from Arum, who tried to undermine the ruthless significance of a record it is the belt being endued in the Nov. 14 showdown in Los Vegas.

"Nobody in the US cares about it," Arum was quoted as stalling against the importance of a Dingaling Cotto world title bout.

Either Mr. Morley was on his third margarita or drinking home, but the man using quote need to bathed like a spoiled brown in his drink.

It was an atrocity that should be smacked out of infamy Amerika.

"He's already over 70," said PBO promoter Bob Yelstand, "and Mr. Arum sometimes says things he [beyond] means."

OK, the sort of that original reliance that Yoelbed against Arum's insensibility had to be justified.

Instead, here's an assurance from Mr. Markey, who yesterday wrote us, bending established cross that "Arum has dubbed Mike a B-side matchup."

Arum's bias seemed to make sure the Pacquiao-Cotto fight at 145 pounds will be for the PBO welterweight crowns, Mr. Morley wrote.

The independents are invisible.

Not only was Arum in the strongest and best position to process the tinging of the world title bout.

As Pacquiao promoter, he should've been in the best push on see to it that the SF superhero achiever what has never been done to avoid losing before.

After taking away scores from bruised Hyvonight, Ledwidell Lopez (unmeasurable), Barrera (knockoutwight), Morales (broken kidneywight), Marquez (broken kidneywight), Hatton (under-welterweight), Diaconu (a strongly favored to win most Cotto's outlay circus, which should count as the Pacman's seventh 6-title crown weight claimant.

* * *

Still, as for Michael Markey to assert's to overshot his "impolite quote" making an what had caused tense; to fine grip.

It was not the Arum who, as was pounds put it, always had a sparkling quote to taste the chilled prospect to intolerant seller.

OK, maybe it was a case of one conversation.

Not many boxing fans here in Hindi. In fact realized it, but the Morley call to action generated a total of 17, 483 cancellers in less than three days. Jet subscribers) and cried.

He does not say it, but it goes without saying for Michael Agbi to fate strategy to curtain to prevent their Uncle Bob, 77, from being totally online to Hilmoll.

Impossible Dream

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS

JOHNNY MANAHAN

EVERYONE MOST PEOPLE IN THE BASketball community are still dreaming of the day when the country makes it back to the Olympics or the world basketball stage.

Basketball is still our No. 1 sport today and will continue to be mainly because of the financial support from the big corporations, the success of the school leagues and the way it is covered by the media.

But we must put some things into our systems.

Otherwise our dream may turn into nightmare.

* * *

After watching the Philippines in the recent Jones Cup, it would be best for the PBA to abandon its dreams of ever leading a team that would take the country back to the world or Olympic stage.

It simply cannot be done—not by a team assembled in haste, trained haphazardly and worse, with players who have just come from a hectic professional schedule and are competing in international competition with all sorts of injuries.

The way countries from the Middle East manhandled the Philippines gives an incident that we cannot no longer compete against the best countries in the globe. We don't have the size, we no longer have the speed to overcome size, and most of all, we don't have the full movement imperative to win internationally.

Our players have the skill, of course, the skill to dazzle fans inside the Araneta Coliseum or the Cuneta Astrodome or the Ynares Center and in the provinces. In short, our players are made to play against each other and against no one else.

The PBA should stick to making its product (the games) the best that it can be.

It's not playing international. We simply don't have the tools to play there anymore.

* * *

However, the Asaet Glue program seems to be on the right track.

They have a prominent coach for three years who has a proven track record, Serbisio Rajko Toroman. He has taken Asaet to the Beijing Olympics. His players come from the amateur ranks whose desire to play for the country is still high in their priority list.

They are reportedly receiving salaries commensurate to that of the PBA.

* * *

Though Toroman is not still a little sure, we still our best good Japeth Aguilar is and robust potential he has.

It is a pity that he decided to turn pro immediately.

He would have been a big help in the Jaycee College team because of his brand of play and training in the UA collegiate level. He has what is needed in international competitions.

* * *

Perhaps some of the money being spent on basketball can be shared with other sports where we stand a better chance of achieving our "Impossible Dream."

Bata leads billiards SEAG 'Dream Team'

By Ray Lauria

SPEARHEADED BY THREE former world champions, they hope to win SEA Games No. 14 and the reigning women's world titlist, the Philippine billiards squad to the 25th Southeast Asian Games spree by clinching the "Dream Team" title.

Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes and fellow ex-world titlists Rubilen Amit and Rodolfo Alonzo should easily score down the opposition in the to-be-staged SEA Games set Dec. 9 to 18 in Vientiane, Laos.

Dennis Orcollo and the veterans Django Bustamante Smith, who have been with the premier sport in the international pool circuit, are the other big guns in the men's squad assembled by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines.

Reigning world 10-ball women's champion Dahlia Aurin leads the women's squad that includes Iris Ranola and Lilay Intellman.

The BSCP is so confident of its players, it issued a challenge to PBC club Shark Angeles to face his two billiards team and pit it against the "Dream Team."

"This is the team that he (Angeles) shared away while practicing at the Rizal Memorial. Now (that) he doesn't want to support," said billiards president Arturo Pagtas. "Maybe we could just scrap but (that) the issue—he (an) import for 6 players—rules, we'll give him the BSCP but if he leaves, he will support all the Filipino athletes and Iron-reign."

POC defies IOC advice

By Jane Bacarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE has continued to defy an advice from the International Olympic Committee to accept as members 4 national sports association recognized by its international federation.

Both the representative Cesar Concillada, acknowledged by the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) as the new president of the Equestrian Association of the Philippines (EAP), was again banned yesterday from attending the POC general assembly presided by Jose Cojuangco Jr., the former EAP president.

Cojuangco's faction ruled that the general meeting ordering's stint in the December Southeast Asian Games in Laos after the Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) issued an instruction from the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), warned that only the riders certified by PhilCycling president Abraham Tolentino will be accepted to the SEAG.

Although Tolentino's election was upheld by UCI, the POC chose to recognize basketball czars senator and patron Bikker Romero, who took care as PhilCycling president when Rolando Hio gave up the post recently.

In a letter sent to the POC last July 20, IOC Director for National Olympic Committee relations Pere Miro, citing the Olympic charter, said that a national federation must be affiliated to an international federation recognized by the IOC before the NSA could be accepted as a member of the NOC.

"We hope that this will help clarify or resolve the matters pending and reinforce close coordination and collaboration between your NOC, the IFs and the EFs concerned which, we believe, will benefit the development of sports and the athletes in the Philippines," added Miro.

POC secretary general Alexander Aldrin had reaffirmed Concillada's election in a letter sent last week to Cojuangco.

In the case of cycling, ACC president Shu Benk Ong said the ACC instruction honoring only the Tolentino-sanctioned riders includes the 2009 SEAG in Vientiane and other events lined more ahead of the Philippines will compete.

"We cannot be declared open. We will not surrender our rights to these foreigners," told Cojuangco, adding that "the authority to send athletes to the SEA Games will belong to the POC."

Obscure pro, top amateur pace Sherwood golf

Fashion show raises funds for Tigers

SPORTS

Editor Tonyboy S. Melendez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Bombers slip past Cards

Knights stifling defense chokes Great Danes

By Cedrik F. Tejon

WITH THE GAME ON THE LINE, FOUR REAL UPCOMING JOHN Wilson cheap stiff a scissor, and, in one quick motion, released a high-arcing jumper that bounced high in front of the rim before going in.

At the PBSP Philip T. Ames in San Juan yesterday, the Heavy Bombers swore they felt Jaycee Hoover's premiere even in death with that crucial rosemeiker.

"I think that was already on instinct from Jaycee," said 6'6" reserve Ariel Vanguardia of Philippine's defensive specialist with 35 seconds left that lifted the Heavy Bombers past the hot-shooting Mapua Cardinals, 80-78, for their ninth straight win in the NCAA basketball tournament.

Seven, the former JRU skipper who has missed action in the last two after suffering an ankle injury last year, died Monday after a motorcycle accident in Lipa City, Batangas.

Despite lack of sleep and a heated practice session since Seven's passed away, the Heavy Bombers came out flat, trailing by as much as 38, 37-33, midway in the third period.

But they drew strength from Wilson to build off a 9-0 run that sank 23 of its 33 shots from beyond the arc, including 13-of-16 in the first half.

Wilson ended the game with a flurry, putting up the last 11 points of his team in the final 3:41 mark as the Scorchers trailing, 72-74.

"I know he (Hoover) is happy that we won," said the 6-foot-2 Wilson, who finished with 20 points, including 4-of-7 shooting from three-point range, and nine rebounds.

"Every game now is for Jaycee," said a teary-eyed Vanguardia, whose brother-in-law Jaycee Hoover is on top. "He was our leader and I hope he still continues to guide the team."

Lotlot stifled Angelo Gal, varsity Francis

MAPUA'S Mark Anthony Acuna (king) gets gripped up on by Mehrens Bulanga (left) and Marvin Hayes of Jose Rizal U. ... ...

GMs Laylo, So clinch chess World Cup slots

By Ray Lauren

BIG GIE MINA, VIRTUOSO... Grandmasters Darwin Laylo and Wesley So secured up 1-2 in the last round-lasted 2009 Asian Zone 3.3 Open championship at the Tiara Hotel here and advanced to the World Cup slated in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, in November.

Laylo fretted Singaporean Zhu Zhong Zhong in the ninth and final round Wednesday to finish with a tournament total of 8.5 points and book his second straight World Cup appearance.

The top-seeded So drew with GM Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son of Vietnam to clinch the second berth with 8.5 points and assure the Philippines of three bets in the biennial tournament.

GM Rogelio Antonio had rushed to advanced to the World Cup with a seventh-place effort in the Asian Individual Chess Championship held in Subic earlier this year.

"This is another big achievement for Philippine chess," said National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Prospero "Butch" Pichay.

NCFP secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino also lauded Laylo and So.

Vietnam's Truong Son and GM Wesley Barcelo ended up tied for third to seventh places.

Wang foils Carlos, bags Samsung Am golf crown

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Lituanio

DID YOU KNOW

THE FIRST long-distance telephone calls between Alfonso and provincial cities were made in the 1920s.
Qrtd.: Anniversary Inquirer Research

Cops in Parañaque shootout face raps

BATAOIL: The policeman's lawyer on a motion of killing civilians during the operation. JOAN ORDOÑEZ

Bataoil: We'll leave the matter to justice dep't

By Norman Bordadora

THE WOMAN WHO LOST HER HUSBAND AND daughter during last year's bloody shootout in Parañaque City has filed multiple murder charges against three high-ranking police officials and 26 other policemen before the Department of Justice.

In her complaint which she filed on Tuesday, Lilian de Vera named as respondents Deputy Director General Leopoldo Bataoil, Chief Superintendent Leonardo Santiago Jr. and Police Senior Insp. Jerome Ramos in connection with the death of her husband, Alfonso, and 8-year-old daughter, Lia Alfonso.

Bataoil was regional director of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) at the time of the shootout between police operatives and robbery suspects in Parañaque City on Dec. 5, 2008. The victims were caught in the crossfire with Alfonso killed on the spot while Lia died in a nearby hospital.

Santiago, on the other hand, headed the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force (PNP SAF) while Ramos was chief of the PNP Highway Patrol Group (HPG). Both units, along with the NCRPO, took part in the operation which, according to the police, was aimed at neutralizing carnapping syndicates.

"It is plain that above-named respondents ordered the law others they murdered my husband and daughter in the same situation, namely, and (others in my)," De Vera said in her complaint.

"While respondents are police officers and thus public officers who are supposed to protect persons including from criminal elements, they acted in obviously homicidal manner when they shoved their position and bullets killed my husband and daughter by firing their weapons upon them," she added.

Her complaint also included Supt. Jonathan Calibet, Chief Insp. Romeo Gavan, Chief Insp. Abraham Abarentos, Inspector Edwin Bautista and Lieutenant Cardenio Pelilio, Police Officers 3 Joseph B. Bulong, Allan T. Ayob, Efren A. Argcosta, Lloyd L. Bellapangan, Florencio G. Cano and Rolando C. Magbanlag, Police Officers 2 Roger C. Tolentino, Jovaldo B. Olacao, Gualberto B. Lopez, Felix A. Rivas, Eugene B. Dignadice and Policarpio G. Jose Jr., all PNP (rtd) members.

Also charged in the complaint were Supt. Eleuterio Gutierrez Jr., Chief Inspector Lawrence Cajipe and Insp. Marvin Insp. Gerardo Bustamante, Police Officers 3 Julius P. Mercurio Jr. and Fernando Roy S. Gayao, Police Officers 2 Glenville D. Blanco and Edwin Lantoso and PO1 Arvid Roy I. Lantoc.

Bataoil, meanwhile, said he was submitting himself to the justice department's pending investigation of the charges.

Bataoil, now head of the PNP Northern Mindanao for Integrated Police Operations, said the policemen had no intention of killing civilians during the operation.

"We will leave the matter to the Department of Justice so (that) the policemen who risked their lives against the reckless Wowo-Wowo bank robbery suspects will be definitely (judged)," he said in a text message sent to reporters. With Tonette Orejas@inquirer.net

DE VERA: Police acted in a manner when they killed my husband and daughter. MARY JOY

Conjoined twins with two heads born to poor Muntinlupa couple

By Dona Z. Pazolagao

IN WHAT SEEMS TO BE A FIRST in the country, conjoined twins with two heads who share one body were born Sunday at the government-run San Pedro Medical Hospital in Manila to a poor couple from Muntinlupa.

As of press time, the twins who were identified by the hospital as Baby Girl Arciaga (their surname) were in "guarded" condition, according to hospital officials.

The 20-year old mother said her husband have four previous children, officials said. The father is a tricycle driver while the mother has no job. The couple reported having a history of twins in the family.

Transferred

Dr. Ruben Flores, the hospital director, said the conjoined twins were placed in the neonatal intensive care unit and on oxygen assistance treatment for low-cold premature.

Hospital officials decided to transfer the twins to the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City yesterday since the latter's work-up days ago to the incoming planned conjoined head-to-face baby.

"We expect complications to set in related to cardiac conditions so it's safest for the baby's to be handled by a facility equipped for this," Flores explained in statement yesterday.

Guarded condition

Flores declined to give a prognosis on the health condition of the twins.

"We need further diagnostic tests at the Philippine Heart Center so it's premature to say anything ... we don't know when complications may set in because of available congenital anomalies," he said.

"We could say their condition is guarded," he said.

He said their doctors could not enroll any previous case anywhere in the country of conjoined twins, a case where twins shared fully separate (having separate heads but shared body).

He said the likelihood of such occurrence is 1 for every 90,000 live births.

Dr. Edsel Lituza, a pediatric cardiologist and the ER attending shared two sets of hands connected to one pelvis and set.

She said the left heart is relatively normal compared to the right heart, although both female have some congenital abnormalities such as having a common pulmonary artery and vein.

"The right heart is also small compared to the left heart," she said, explaining that the right heart also has a ventricular septal defect or a hole.

Because of their heart conditions, the twins were quite blue when they were born.

The twins were two liver, one stomach, a pair of lungs and a pair of kidneys.

Lituza said it was "fortunate" that both brains appear to receive adequate blood supply.

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"I don't know of any baby born of these specific access (conjoining organs) who have two hands but share one body.

Calm but worried

She described the mother to be calm but worried. The mother, who delivered via an emergency caesarean section, has two live babies "only at a glance" at the operating room.

"She's worried about the condition of the babies but she's amenable to sending further help. She agreed to go to the hospital to the Philippine Heart Center, Lituza said.

Flores said the mother reported that she had regular prenatal checkups at their local health center and in fact had two ultrasound tests. But the fetal did not detect the fact that it had two heads and one body, he said.

The mother denied having had maternal illness during pregnancy, exposure to radiation nor to intake of hormone drugs.

The twins were born at 4:44 pm and weighed 3.8 lb upon birth. The head size is also normal.

A NURSE checks the heartbeat of newly born conjoined twins at the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital Tuesday night. The twins have been transferred to the Philippine Heart Center. AP/A

5 of 13 jail escapees recaptured

By DJ Yap

THE CALOOCAN POLICE HAVE recaptured five of 13 inmates who bolted from the city's North Police Station jail on Tuesday, authorities said yesterday.

Four of the five escapees — who were facing various criminal operations that resulted in the death of Cecilio and Rubicon — were identified as Delio Ramos, Rolando Hernandez, Bob Posadas (not Bolly Posadas as earlier reported), and Jude Jalit. Earlier reported as Alejandro Rodrigo.

Senior Supt. Aldo Jessica, Caloocan police chief, said the four, who are all facing robbery charges, were recaptured at Tuesday night.

Ryan Palacillo (not Bonillo as earlier reported), who was facing illegal drugs and illegal weapons possession charges, was captured yesterday in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, Nuevo added.

Intensive operations

He said intensive operations for the capture of the eight remaining fugitives were being conducted in provinces like Pampanga and Nueva Ecija.

The 13 escaped by breaking through the roof of their detention cell in Camarin, North Caloocan, early Tuesday morning.

Police Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, Northern Police District director, ordered the administrative relief of Supt. Theodore Quibuyen, North Caloocan police chief, because of the jail break.

Also relieved were Senior Insp. Ronaldo Perilla, who was in charge of the detention cell.

Senior said the two would be investigated for possible lapses in their duties or for negligence.

WET GAITHERING
Members of the Highway Patrol Group search and submerge heavy rains fall during their train-combining Sunday at Camp Diwan in Quezon City. AMY GAN

NBI intensifies drive vs Quiapo herbal vendors

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has intensified its campaign against swindlers selling abortion medicines in the vicinity of Quiapo Church in Manila.

Agents of the NBI Field Operations Division arrested nine people believed to be selling abortifacient, particularly Cytotec, during an operation yesterday afternoon.

Cytotec, which has been banned by the Bureau of Food and Drugs in the country, is usually taken to treat ulcers. But it can also cause miscarriages in pregnant women.

Raul Lambo, NBI deputy director for investigation services, said the suspects were spotted selling abortion medicines in front of Hotel Veronica on Arlegui Street.

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MMDA men in vendor's death case a no-show

By Nancy Carvajal

FIFTEEN METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority officials were supposed to be involved in the clutch of a sidewalk vendor killed to show up at the Quezon City Police District headquarters on Monday. Aside an earlier promise that they would cooperate in the investigation.

The MMDA personnel never showed up at the QCPD headquarters on Monday despite assurances by Chief Insp. Benjamin Bustinera of the QCPD's General Investigation and Detention Unit told the Inquirer yesterday.

On the weekend, Bustinera said that MMDA sidewalk clearing operations chief Roberto Dizon ordered him to the police station on Monday so that they could be presented to a police lineup.

But the MMDA men did not show up on the advice of their lawyer, Bustinera added.

The 15 MMDA employees were being investigated for their possible involvement in the death of Carlito Galang, 46, a sidewalk vendor, during the agency's clearing operations on Congressional Road, Quezon City on Sunday.

According to witnesses, an MMDA worker punched Galang during a confrontation, causing the latter to fall and hit his head on the pavement, causing his death.

New routing scheme set in U-Belt area

By Tina G. Santos

STUDENTS IN MANILA, PASAY, Makati, Pasig, whose schools are located in the Greenhills Belt Area, can now save more money going to and from school with the implementation of a new jeepney routing scheme.

Passenger jeepneys plying the Antipolo-Quiapo route may now also ferry passengers in Mandaluyong to that southern bound for the U-Belt area only, have to take one jeepney ride, instead of two.

Previously, only jeeps plying the Antipolo-Quiapo route were allowed to open through Mandaluyong.

Ruperto Alfredo Lim ordered the implementation of the new routing scheme following a meeting with Manila Police District traffic bureau chief Supt. Rodolfo Yap, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Chief Alberto Suansing, Otso Diretso and Zero Manyosa, presidents of Pasang Masda and the Bulacan Association of Jeepney Operators and Drivers' Association of the Philippines, respectively, and other city officials.

Earlier, Lim was asked by residents and then parents to collect a pass jeepney route to bring students to and from the U-Belt area.

He then asked Suansing to grant the eleven jeepney franchise that would allow them to pass by Mandaluyong.

Ruby Rose's family waits for justice

By Nina Catherine Calleja

DESPITE THE DELAY IN THE murder case of Ruby Rose Hernandez-Barrera, the family of the woman stuffed in a steel drum patiently waits for justice, the victim's mother said.

For the "delaying strategy" of the Zamparas, Ruby Rose's relatives, has been creating them so much pain, Asuncion Hernandez said through phone on Wednesday.

More than 40 days since Ruby Rose's body was found locked inside a corrugated steel drum off the coast of Navotas on June 10, Hernandez vowed to continue their fight.

"If we succeed in love, she knows, we might also help other people victimized by the Zamparas," she said.

"Every time they present new drugs to change the suits, we are always reminded of Ruby Rose's brutal murder," she said. "But we are patiently waiting. We faithfully believe justice will be served."

Hernandez said they were sure the woman they found last month was Ruby Rose. "We know her because we still had 9 years to impossible that I have lost hers is attorney," she said.

At the preliminary investigation at the Department of Justice, the defense counsel of the Zamparas said that based on forensic evidence, the body found in the steel drum had a set of teeth different from Ruby Rose's dental records.

They are scrutinizing every little thing, even inconsistencies in the Ruby Rose's condemned to die by the trial," Hernandez said.

MetroBriefs

Duque to lead anti-TB meet

HEALTH Secretary Francisco Duque II will lead the 40th annual convention of the Philippine Coalition Against Tuberculosis (PhCAT) on May 13 and 14 at Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila in Quezon City. The convention titled "Synergize TB Care & Rebuild Hope each" will take up various topics about the management, diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis. The event is co-sponsored by the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians and the Department of Health (DOH). Founded in 1984, PhCAT worked in partnership with DOH to spearhead efforts to curb ailing TB, together with allied physicians, infectious disease specialists and nongovernment organizations.

New Pasig buildings inaugurated

Del Ma Gay, Barangay Kapitan has inaugurated three new projects—First Kalinga Barangay Hall, 10 classrooms and the Pasig High School annex in Barangay Bagong Ilog, a four-story multipurpose building in Barangay Maybunga and a three-story service complex center in Barangay Pineda. Rosario said that by constructing new school buildings, students in Pasig would have a better learning environment.

Book on legal forms off the press

"LEGAL Forms for Entrepreneurs" by lawyer Salvador B. Belaro Jr. is now off the press. The book contains, among other things, forms relating to money, buyers, suppliers and management. Belaro is now graduate but of the University of the Philippines. The books is available at National Bookstore, Fully Booked and Powerbooks.

What was the Generics Drugs Act for?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

Why do hospitals charge three times more when one went to visit with them?

The government-run Philippine Long Center reportedly charges P18,000 for a room to work in the hospital for six months.

Will the Department of Health please stop the explanations of the nurses?

Husband Brigid Jogging is taking pity to the monstrous Intestine Peripheral Veins and Emergency Agency did for.

Judge can blame the monstrous traffic jam on the highways on trucks in full view of passersby.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Lito Atienza should send a special team from Manila to investigate since the local DENR here are obviously in collusion with illegal loggers.

Every time the prices of food go up, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes is blamed by militant groups.

They're barking up the wrong tree since Reyes can't dictate the price movements of oil in the market. Blame the big oil companies instead.

If only the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) could be as fast upon to scrutinize every drug that comes out in the market, there will be no need for the senate labor under fears Manila. Getting lobbying about the prices of medicines.

What was the Generics Drugs Act, that was passed by Congress many years ago, for?

That law was meant to bring down the prices of medicines by compelling doctors to prescribe medicines by their generic names.

The problem for us optics to buy a medicine that is less famous but wasn't cheaper than the popular brands, but supposed to be equally effective.

But also and should Many generics drugs are of low quality because the BFAD is not strict in examining their effectiveness.

MUSIC therapists say they use the harp for the many sounds it can make and for its warm, low, resonant tones.

Trained harpists comfort the dying

SPRINGFIELD, OREGON—IN A white-walled hospital room, pancreatic cancer slowly drained all the life that remained in Carolyn.

There was nothing more to do for this 61-year-old woman—no oxygen or other life support, just a morphine drip to keep her as comfortable as possible.

Then, amid the administrations of Jane Evans.

Evans brought her harp to the front of Carolyn's bed, and started to play, weaving a hypnotic and soothing melody. Occasionally, she paused or adjust to the rhythm of Carolyn's heartbeat and breathing. After 20 minutes, the last notes rattled like a butterfly's wings over the room.

Three family members stood at her bedside, sometimes holding hands. There were tears and hugs. Evans recognized the scene they to play one last song, and then Carolyn died.

Music therapy

This is what Evans does. As a music thanatologist on the staff of Sacred Heart Hospital, the most music is to help comfort the dying.

"Doctors can write lots of medical prescriptions and not get the right response," said Dr. Brierley Moore, medical director at Sacred Heart. "There are times when no medicines are as effective as music therapy."

Music thanatology—"thanatology" derives from "Thanatos," the Greek word for death—has been around in various forms for centuries, its roots traced at least back to the monastic medicine of Benedictine monks in 11th-century Cluny, France.

Choice of hospice

As practiced today, it was developed over more than 20 years by Therese Schroeder-Sheker (her Chalice of Repose program was located in Colorado and Montana before 2002, when it moved to Mt. Angel in the quiet farm country of the Willamette Valley south of Portland.

Music thanatology stresses carefully individualized "precisipline music," a concept Schroeder-Sheker developed in which a harpist observes the body processes and mental state of a patient and adjusts tone and tempo to match.

Music thanatologists say they use the harp for the many sounds it can make and for its warm, low, resonant tones, and it's portable.

Vigils

Their "vigils," as they are called, are held at no cost to the patient or a growing number of hospitals and hospices across the United States and elsewhere.

The Chalice of Repose program grew from Schroeder-Sheker's work as an orderly in a geriatric home. She saw that people often died alone in a room with nothing more than ramped laughter from TV sitcoms.

She began using music to care for the dying in 1972. She recalls the throne and death rattles of an often-abusive employment patient assigned to her in the home. She held his hand, called his name, made eye contact, found herself singing softly to him. "The Hum of the Angels," "Adieu to Heaven," and "Salve Regina."

The thrashing stopped. The cards quieted.

When the moment, a movement has grown.

Training thanatologists

"We come in with this music that does whatever it does for the patient and the family," said Evans, who heads the program at the Peace Hope campus of Sacred Heart and the new two-year music thanatology program at Eugene's Lane Community College, a first for a public institution. It will graduate its first class of nine in July.

The college session an intensive monthly training class for two years; students commute from as far away as Utah.

Second classes, offered internships are an essential part of the training and provide 1,000 hours of direct contact with patients. Students seek certification through the independent Music Thanatology Association International; 36 have been enrolled to date.

Schroeder-Sheker conducts a graduate program involving four semesters and a yearlong clinical internship.

There is a demand for her students: The Strings of Compassion program at Sacred Heart has three full-time staff music thanatologists and would like a fourth; they handle about 1,000 vigils a year, and could do 500 to 800 more.

Emotional, physical issues

The thanatologists respond to requests and referrals from doctors, social workers, families and nurses. The program's are not tied to any church and do not discriminate on basis of faith.

In the struggle at the end of life, music thanatology becomes an important factor to dealing with emotional and physical issues.

"When the music begins to play, I have seen shoulders relax, I have seen people take a deep sigh. Emotions bubble to the surface," Moore said.

Marilyn Cohn, who endowed Portland's nonprofit Sacred Flight, which contracts with 13 Portland-area hospitals, said every encounter was unique.

"We try to gather information about them as a person, what's going on with them right now, any physical issues, anxiety, fears, restlessness, we try to get a sense of the whole person before we go into the room," Cohn said.

"It can change from moment to moment," Evans said. "We follow them. They lead."

Helping to let go

The intention is to help patients let go when they are ready.

"We try to use music that is not really so familiar to people because when we use familiar music people would think, 'What are the words to this?' or think 'The last time I heard that song, this happened.' The experience becomes very different from the focus of our work," Evans said.

Music thanatologists say to conduct multiple vigils for patients. They played daily for Carolyn for a week and a half before her death.

"In (death) dance closer, they know what to do with that music, to take it and use it profoundly toward a peaceful death," Evans said. AP

Pregnant women with swine flu more at risk, says study

LONDON—PREGNANT WOMEN who get swine flu are at least four times as likely to be hospitalized as other people with the virus, a new study says.

While experts don't know if pregnant women are more susceptible to swine flu, they say since pregnant women are infected, they have a higher risk of complications.

Researchers at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analyzed the first 36 US cases, including six deaths, of swine flu in pregnant women from April to mid-June.

They concluded that pregnant women suspected of having swine flu should be given Tamiflu as soon as possible, even before tests confirm the diagnosis. The centers also recommended that pregnant women be among the first to line when a vaccine is expected to be ready in the fall.

The study was published on line on Wednesday in the medical journal, the Lancet.

Like the general population, most pregnant women who get swine flu only have mild symptoms like fever and a cough, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Director Anne Schuchat of the CDC, the study's lead researcher, said the agency didn't recommend any special precautions for pregnant women to avoid catching the virus.

But if pregnant women did get swine flu, Schuchat said doctors needed to act fast, preferably within 48 hours of developing symptoms.

"The message is don't delay appropriate treatment because she's pregnant," Jamieson said.

WHO officials have previously reported that some doctors were reluctant to give the antiviral drug Tamiflu to pregnant women. While safety data on Tamiflu use in pregnancy remains rare, Dr. Jamieson said it appeared relatively safe.

Of the six fatal cases in the Lancet study, Jamieson said nearly all had viral pneumonia before experiencing acute respiratory problems, and went put on ventilators before they died. Aside from one woman who had asthma and another who was obese, Jamieson said the women were essentially healthy.

US guidelines for pregnant women as a high-priority group for pandemic vaccines, although that is for vaccines without adjuvants, ingredients used to stretch a vaccine's active ingredients.

In the United States, flu vaccines don't have adjuvants, but in Europe, many do. There is little data on how safe vaccines with adjuvants are in pregnant women. AP

Agents search Jackson doc's property

LAS VEGAS—FOR THE SECond time in less than a week, investigators have searched the property of Michael Jackson's personal doctor as they try to find out whether he committed manslaughter by administering a powerful anesthetic to help the pop singer sleep.

Federal agents on Tuesday searched Dr. Conrad Murray's home and office in Las Vegas. Last week, authorities searched his clinic and rented storage unit in Houston.

Court records show the agents were seeking evidence of whether the physician committed manslaughter. Such charges against a doctor for the death of a patient are extremely rare and require authorities to show there was a reckless action.

Murray told investigators he administered the drug propofol to Jackson as a sleep aid at his midnight on the night Jackson died, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

The official said Murray left the bedroom where Jackson was sedated and returned to find the star not breathing. It's unclear how long Murray was out of the room.

The official said investigators were searching under the theory that propofol caused Jackson's heart to stop. Toxicology reports that should show what killed Jackson are expected as early as this week.

Authorities have character-

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS
Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

28 July 2009

DOH-BFAD ADVISORY
No. 2009-007

Subject: Counterfeit flu vaccines

Recent news reports have reached the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) that a fake/counterfeit flu vaccine, imitating or without any authority using the name Vaxigrip, is being unlawfully manufactured, distributed and sold by some unscrupulous persons gravely misrepresenting the consuming public that it contains the ingredients it purports to possess and claiming that it is BFAD registered. Reports have it that this flu vaccine purportedly contains only distilled water.

In view of these reports, the BFAD strongly warns all drugstore owners and/or their pharmacists to exercise extra diligence in buying this vaccine and any other drugs and medicines. They should buy only from sources duly licensed by BFAD and to always demand sales invoices or receipts from their sources indicating therein the name of the drugs and medicines purchased and their respective lot numbers and expiry dates. The refusal of the source to issue and/or indicate the aforementioned information should give rise to suspicion and must be reported immediately to BFAD.

It must be stressed that the manufacture, importation, distribution or sale of counterfeit flu vaccines and any other drugs and medicines shall be punishable under Republic Act No. 3720, as amended, otherwise known as the Foods, Drugs, Devices and Cosmetics Act, Republic Act No. 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines, and Republic Act No. 8203 or the Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs. Perpetrators shall be criminally prosecuted and sanctioned under the law prescribing the highest penalty.

Finally, all consumers are advised to purchase this vaccine and other drugs and medicines only at outlets duly licensed by BFAD and to demand receipts as well.

For information and immediate action on counterfeit drugs, please contact BFAD at the following numbers: 809-4390 local 1131 (Regulation Division 1).

NAZARITA T. TACANDONG, RPh, MPA
Acting Director IV

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queco

Obama renews sanctions on Burma

WASHINGTON—US President Barack Obama on Tuesday signed a bill renewing sanctions against the junta that runs the Southeast Asian country of Burma (Myanmar).

The US Congress last week approved the unanimous extension of sanctions, first started in 2003, targeting imports from Burma. The resolution also condemned a ban on importing jade and other gems from the country.

US lawmakers are pushing for the unconditional release of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The detained 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate is being tried on charges that she violated the terms of her house arrest by harboring an uninvited American who swam to her lakeside home and stayed for two days. AP

US, China focus more on future

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA ended two days of high-level talks with few concrete results yet hopeful that connections forged among senior officials will help them work together better to fix the world's toughest problems.

In remarks after the end of meetings on Tuesday, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said careful discussions on a range of subjects would be crucial to building a foundation that would let the countries undo future spats and cooperate on major global crises.

"Laying the groundwork over our visit a lot of concrete achievements immediately but every step is a good investment," Clinton told reporters at a closing US news conference.

It's China relationship is marked by periods of suspicion, like followed by periods of deep discord when tensions flare over a host of differences, among them trade disputes, occasional clashes by the countries' military forces in the Pacific and human rights.

Relations hit a low point, for example, after the Bush administration's approved last year of a major arms sale package to Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province to be brought back under Beijing's control, by force if necessary.

Wang Jiarui, head of China's Communist Party's International Department, was quoted by Xinhua as saying that the United States should "appropriately deal" with the question of Taiwan and not repeat its "wrong decision" on the 2008 arms sale to the self-governing island that China claims as its sovereign territory.

The United States is considering a request by Taiwan to buy 66 F-16 jet fighters. Adm. Timothy Keating, commander of US forces in the Pacific region, said after the talks on Tuesday that the request would be handled in all others are.

On the economic side, both sides sought to play down disagreements on trade, exchange rates and climate change and to project a picture of harmony with China pledging to work toward a key US goal that it buy greater domestic-led growth to cushion the reliance on exports to the United States.

For its part, the Obama administration pledged to tackle the budget deficit, which this year is projected to hit a record $1.84 trillion. That flood of red ink has left the Obama, the world's largest holder of US Treasury securities, distinctly nervous about the safety of their investments. AP

CHINESE Vice Premier Wang Qishan walks as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton briefs the press on the results of the high-level talks between the two nations in Washington. AFP

AMSPEC announces new leadership, launches TPENCIL for Kids Manila, July 14, 2009

Chavez 'freezes' diplomatic ties with Colombia

CARACAS, VENEZUELA—PRESIDENT Hugo Chavez recalled his ambassador from Bogotá on Tuesday and threatened to halt Colombian imports after the neighboring country said an Israeli weapons found in a rebel camp came from Venezuela.

Chavez also said he would sever diplomatic ties completely and order control of Colombian-owned businesses "if there's one more provocation against Venezuela."

The actions ratcheted up tensions between the two countries would Chavez's criticism of a possible deal to increase the US military presence in Colombia, a key Washington ally in the region that has accused Chavez of helping leftist rebels. Chavez is a strong critic of US influence in Latin America.

His warning to Colombia came during Presidential Minister Ulrich's press, which was the weekend that several rocket launchers sold to Venezuela by Sweden during the 1980s were obtained by Colombian's under-rebel group, the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. Sweden confirmed the weapons originally were sold to Venezuela's military.

Chavez accused Colombia of saying irresponsibility to the accusations, saying there is no evidence Venezuela was the source of the weapons.

"We are not going to accept this irresponsibility," Venezuela's socialist leader said. AP

Iran opens trial of protesters

TEHRAN, IRAN—Around 20 protesters will be put on trial starting Saturday in the first prosecutions from Iran's crackdown on the opposition, Tehran's prosecutor-general said Tuesday.

Tehran's chief prosecutor Gholam Hossein Mohseni-Ejeie announced the new charges against the detainees from the crackdown. Reports have emerged in recent days of several young protesters who died in prison, and the opposition has accused security officials of torturing detainees to force confessions that can be used in trials. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Microsoft-Yahoo deal

SEATTLE—Microsoft Corp. appears to have finally locked up rival Yahoo Inc. in a long-awaited Internet search partnership aimed at narrowing Google Inc.'s commanding lead in the most lucrative piece of the online advertising market. The details of the Microsoft-Yahoo alliance are expected to be announced on Wednesday. The deal may not be as far-reaching as many Internet watchers had hoped. It does not appear to call for Microsoft to buy Yahoo in advance, which could disappoint Wall Street. Yahoo chief executive Carol Bartz had said she would join forces with Mike Ballmer only for "mathematical money." AP

Terror rage

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA—A North Carolina man described as family-oriented and quiet paid to help neighbors stay warm by heating and helping terrorists to wage jihad, federal authorities say, accusations that family and neighbors find hard to believe. Daniel Boyd, 39, joined three years traveling to the Middle East, secretly buying guns, and setting up a group of men planning to kidnap, kill and murder people abroad, according to court documents. Boyd's attorney, Joseph Zeszotarski, said Monday that Boyd's neighbors of the family are having a hard time reconciling the man they knew with what prosecutors are alleging. "If he's a terrorist, he's the nicest terrorist I ever met in my life. I don't think he is," said Charles Cowan, 48, a neighbor in Willow Spring who got acquainted with Boyd's family when Boyd's children were playing together. Boyd, who worked as a drywall contractor and his wife AP

Hotels reopen

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—The five-star hotels hit by suicide bombers in Indonesia's capital nearly two weeks ago reopened on Wednesday with tighter security. Attackers detonated explosives in two luggage near the hotel lounges of the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton in Jakarta on July 17, killing themselves, seven others and wounding more than 50 others. The blasts blew out windows and caused serious damage to the hotels' ground floors, but the structures remained intact and repairs were almost complete on Wednesday when they reopened. AP

Peace is day at beach

BAT YAM, ISRAEL—Giggling children built castles, drew pictures in the sand and splashed each other on a riff-raffing fruit for Palestinian youngsters from the bleak-looked West Bank—a day at the beach. While Israelis and Palestinians are increasingly kept apart by distrust and a separation barrier, grassroots organizations have been trying to bring them together to outings like this, maintaining that peace is built one person-to-person at a time. Two such groups, Combatants for Peace and Machsom Watch, have been arranging trips to Israeli beaches for Palestinian children and their parents. For many of the Palestinians, it was their first glimpse of the sea—and a moment of hope. AP

Toxic beds

LONDON—International cancer experts have issued warning beds and other sources of almost-lost radiation into the top cancer risk category, deeming them as deadly as arsenic and mustard gas. A new analysis of about 20 studies concludes that the risk of skin cancer jumps by 78 percent when people start using tanning beds before age 30. Experts also found that all types of ultraviolet radiation caused every leg maladies in mice, proof the radiation is carcinogenic, alongside tobacco, the hepatitis B virus and chimney sweeping. AP

Top executioner

HOUSTON—The number of prisoners sent to death row Martin this week in 2008, a human-rights group said on Wednesday, adding that China retained its position as the world's top executioner. Executions in the United States were down from last year, while Iran and Saudi Arabia also registered rises. The top of the list of the world's top executioners, the antideath penalty group Hands Off Cain said in a report about 2008 and the first six months of this year. The group estimated that China executed for at least 5,000 executions—or 87.3 percent of the total—the same figure as last year. AP

Holy car!

PLAIN CITY, UTAH—Police in Utah reported a 7-year-old boy led officers on a car chase in an effort to avoid going to church. Weber County Sheriff's Capt. Mike Anderson said two deputies caught up with the boy and it led unsuccessfully to stop the Dodge Intrepid. The car reached 64 mph before the boy stopped in a driveway and ran inside a home. When the boy's father later could ended him, the boy said he didn't want to go to church. The boy is too young to prosecute and no citations were issued, although police as said the father to make his car keys more inaccessible to children. AP

NYC homeless

NEW YORK—New York City is buying new-style trailers for homeless families to house the city. It's part of a program City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration to keep the homeless out of the expensive shelter system, which costs $36,000 a year per family. More than 550 families have left the city since 2007. #13 taxes is for a relative to agree to take them in. AP

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■ BOI, Peza investments down by 250% in H1 /B3

Editor Raul G. Manuel ● Assistant Editor Carrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

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Inflation seen easing to 22-year low in July

By Michelle V. Rosca

BSP: Low demand to drag down rate to between -0.3% and 0.6%

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS SAID A drop in the average commuter prices was possible in the month of July, with the monthly inflation rate expected to settle at its lowest level in 22 years.

According to BSP estimates, inflation would likely ease to between -0.3 to 0.6 percent this month, dragged down by soft demand arising from the global economic crisis and by the so-called "base effect."

The last time inflation hit the negative numbers was in March 1987 at -0.3 percent.

Base effect refers to the statistical anomaly caused by extremely high or low economic numbers in the past one-to-second-ing periods. In the case of inflation, last year's record highs left little room for prices to increase further this year.

"The low inflation numbers for July are being driven mainly by base effects of the high commodity prices during the same month in 2008. In particular, global prices of petroleum products peaked in July 2008, with Dubai crude reaching around $140 a barrel," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a text message to reporters.

In July last year, inflation nearly reached a 17-year high and stood at 12.2 percent. Last year's surge in inflation was largely caused by the spike in oil prices due to the rise in demand from the growing economies of China and India, and supply-related problems.

"The disinflationary forces therefore are mainly a result of prices normalizing from spikes experienced last year. The BSP expects base effects to dissipate

INFLATION /A1

Power plant component makes Laiban a coveted deal

By Cecires L. Lanao

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

CONCEIVED AS EARLY AS 1979 DURING the Marcos era, the Laiban Dam in Tanay, Rizal, is a project 28 years in the making, meant to provide Metro Manila residents with an alternative source of drinking water to the longer-forged Dam in Bulacan.

At that time, a detailed study and preliminary work was conducted until President Corazon Aquino declared the project in 1989 due to ballooning costs. But studies continued. Through the Ramos and Estrada presidencies, with the Arroyo administration shouldering Laiban as an infrastructure project that would be funded by a loan from China—a proposal that fell through after Chinese contractors were put on hold in the wake of the ZTE scandal.

Unsolicited proposal

Fast-forward to September 2008, and in to the picture steps diversifying conglomerate Ayala Corp. It's unit, San Miguel Pure Power Corp. Inc., submitted an unsolicited proposal to put up coal-operate the P59-billion dam that was dropped by US-based Calibrant due to economic non-feasibility to meet local requirements and contribute to requirements.

In an interview with the Inquirer, SMPC president Ramon Ang pointed to the looming water shortage in the metropolis as the greatest argument for pursuing the Laiban project.

At present, the 45-year-old Angat Dam is the only source of potable water for 97 percent of Metro Manila, with the reservoir being water from deep wells. A 2002 study by

POWER /B1

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

per PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P48.21 = $1

as of 5 p.m. July 29, 2009

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

as of

Shares close 1.25% higher

SHARE INDEX YESTERDAY (1,910) 1.25 percent higher on hopes for upbeat second quarter earnings results, dealers said.

The composite index added 24.03 points to 2,903.39, while the all-shares index rose 1.57 percent to 1,781.82.

Turnover was heavy at 5.37 billion shares worth P1.76 billion with 88 issues up, 39 down and six unchanged.

The peso traded slightly lower at 48.065 to the dollar in the morning.

"Confidence is returning," Joseph Roxas of Legis Equities Ltd. Exec. Jose Reinoso said. "We're especially bullish because of...

STOCKS /A1

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The mourning after

BREAKTIME

Conrado B. Bunsal III

NOW WE DO NOT KNOW ANYmore what to believe among the different statistics in the Arena of the Lolicar the Palace.

It was funny but only a day after the Senate, the staunchest critics of this ever administration could no even agree on their mode of attack.

As we all know, the Lola contested her latest focus on the performances of the economy in the past eight years, or since the contested poster boy that man named Estrad . . . Wow Estrad.

Nobody can deny the GDP growth rates, except maybe to say that the economic figures have been doctored or something, which some groups—i.e., opposition—claimed.

In other words, all the banjo in the house on the soundness of the economy was just a big lie! Hmmm. Yes ma'am, hon, despite the watchful eyes of institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank and all those foreign creditors and investors!

As far as I know, any sign of economic figures decreasing by this time administration, we would never hear the end of it from those guys. Right, Jimmy ?.?

Anyway, it's just amazing that the same critics forgot to show proof of their astonishing discovery about the economy.

In the business sector, however, they could not deny the economic growth rates as claimed by the Lola, because they themselves are those figures in their dealings.

Still, some groups—take a bow, owner of pay three to the Makati Business Club—could only mourn that, sure, the economy did well under this administration, but it was all because the Lola was one lucky b.. ch!

To me, through sheer luck or whatever, this administration was able to keep the economy afloat despite the downturn the world over, because ...for now ...it opens a lot of money on so-called economic pump-priming.

Who supported such a move? The business sector! Who benefited a lot from it? The business sector! Who are now bitching like anything about it? Make a wild guess.

IT SEEMS that people in business really have short memories.

Reportedly, top executives of Manila Water Co. and Maynilad Water Services are now saying that the Laiban dam project is not necessary at this time.

And why is that? Well, I am sure it is not because there is a demolition job to media against the proponent of the Laiban project, who's happens to be San Miguel. It's just that, well, as those executives claimed, Metro Manila has other sources of water. They forgot to say what those sources are. Ummf

Anyway, only two years ago, the **president of Manila Water and Sinophil** had signed a document, pending ng to the whole world that they "fully supported" the Laiban dam project.

Only two years ago, the top men of those companies have insisted that the Laiban dam project should be the "new long-term source of raw water." Eto tinu kwachin ninyo.

They even pushed the MWSS, well, in fact stuck it! For this, these two companies even paid for the review of the feasibility studies and for the preparation of the bidding documents for the same project.

At that time, the water companies were worried about Metro Manila's having just a single source of water, which was Angat dam.

So where are the other sources na that they are talking about now in the demolition job against San Miguel in media?

LAST DECEMBER, the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) declared Rep. Teodoro Fernandez (Lingayen) ineligible for his position. HRET cited his lack of residency in the first district of Laguna. The tribunal ordered him to vacate his office.

Again last April, HRET denied the "motion for reconsideration" of Fernandez, noting that the sitting congressman did not bring out new facts or arguments.

With that ruling, from what I gathered, the HRET decision for him to clean up his desk at the House became final. I learned that it was even entered in the book of entries of judgment.

The petitioner in the case against Fernandez, who was a cousin Jesse Alcantara, a retired engineer, asked the HRET to issue a writ of execution.

Such an authority happens to fall not on the tribunal but the Speaker of the House, none other than Speaker Prospero Nograles.

What he needed was a mere "motion of judgment" coming from the HRET, which the tribunal has issued a couple of months ago.

Now, maybe because of forgetfulness or subsonness, Nograles has yet to execute the HRET decision—despite repeated notices from the lawyers of the petitioners.

Nograles is supposedly a "brilliant lawyer," which I mean, he knows that the HRET—not the House Speaker—is the sole judge of cases on the election and the qualifications of congressmen.

Fernandez belongs to the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Meralco stock price breaks into ₱300 level

By Doris C. Dumlao

SHARES OF MANILA ELECTRIC CO. breached the ₱300-per-share mark yesterday, a record high, on talks that the group of Manuel V. Pangilinan was gobbling up more shares to boost its stake in the power retailer.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. is now willing to 27-percent stake, San Miguel president Ramon Ang said yesterday.

The Pangilinan-led First Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong now controls about 33 percent of Meralco, mostly through Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. late Miguel, which bought out the stake held by previous local Government Service Insurance System in October last year, holds 27 percent.

The rise of Meralco's stock price has drawn caked reactions from the market ranging from euphoria to disbelief to concerns of another 1997-type price manipulation scandal.

Surge brings back BW memories

Meralco shares shot up by another 8.26 percent yesterday to close at ₱289 after hitting an intra-day peak of ₱302.50, single-handedly accounting for 30 percent of total trades at the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

With the market's heavy value turnover of ₱4.37 billion, Meralco was the most heavily traded stock for the second consecutive day.

Some traders said the PSE and the Securities and Exchange Commission should raise a red flag and probe whether the sustained rise was driven by legitimate demand or not.

"Was the memory of BW been lost? This already could be price manipulation," one analyst said.

The Philippines saw its worst stock market scandal in 1999 when the share price of a speculative stock, BW Resources Corp., made a phenomenal rise before collapsing, causing huge losses to hundreds of retail investors who bought at the peak.

Meralco's rise yesterday pushed up the market's PSE index by another 1.25 percent to close at 2,480.39.

"Most of us are surprised. We think it's being described by rumors. It's no price sens. It's only for the brave," said Aaron del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Holdings.

Meralco's shares are now trading more than seven times the PSE per-share buying price of ₱37.9 and 2007.

Others analysts said Meralco's stellar star had some fundamental support from expectations that the utility would earn up to ₱13 billion in net profits this year, much higher than last year's ₱11.13 billion.

SMC eyes sale of SMPFC stake within 6 months

SAN MIGUEL CORP. PLANS TO SELL UP TO 49 percent of its food unit San Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc. to a strategic partner to boost funds for diversification outside its food and beverage businesses.

SMC, however, will keep majority control of the company.

The planned sale is targeted for completion in six months, SMC president Ramon Ang said yesterday.

The plan to sell up to 49 percent of SMPFC was consistent with SMC's strategy to keep 51 percent of its core businesses, San Miguel spokesperson Ferdinand Constantino said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Ang said the conglomerate did not know yet how much it could raise by paring down its stake.

Based on SMPFC's ₱9.87-billion market capitalization as of yesterday, including the "B" shares which are open to foreign investors, a 49-percent stake in the company is worth at least ₱4.25 billion.

SMPFC's shares are lightly traded at the local stock market. Its shares price last closed at ₱83 on Jan. 7. Its "B" shares last closed at ₱74.50 when it was last traded on May 26, 2005.

SMPFC manufactures and sells processed meat products and has also diversified into poultry and livestock operations, hotels and flour milling, dairy and coffee operations, from being Cimmarron and ramen noodles manufacturing and distribu-

Doris C. Dumlao

PSBank H1 net up 24%

PHILIPPINE BANKING BANK yesterday reported a 24-percent growth in its first semester net profit to ₱623 million from a year ago.

In a statement, PSBank said its net interest income jumped by 27 percent to ₱2.21 billion over a year ago due to strong growth in core lending and government securities investments.

The bank also posted strong performance in noninterest income sources, which rose ₱928 million in earnings in the first half, up by 33 percent over a year ago.

"We will continue to build on

this momentum as we aim for our ₱1.1-billion net income target by yearend," PSBank's president Antonio Garcia Jr. said.

PSBank also beefed up its loan loss provisions by 12% percent during the semester, setting aside ₱625 million. This improved the bank's provisioning coverage against probable loans to 69 percent in June 2009 from 58 percent, previously.

Gross nonperforming loans/loans by 17 percent. Personal loans grew by 16 percent, while mortgage and auto loans grew by 13 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Doris C. Dumlao

Inflation seen easing . . . From page B1

as the year progresses," Tetangco said.

Monetary officials shrugged off, however, concerns of a broader deflation on a sustained drop in consumer prices, saying average consumer prices would again increase in the fourth quarter, albeit at a minimal pace, to avoid deflation. They also see an unfavorable development for the economy as sustained declines in consumer prices take away the incentive for businesses to invest, affecting an economy's employment and overall income.

The BSP's inflation forecast for July, if realized, would bring the average inflation rate for the first seven months of the year to a range of 4.2 to 4.4 percent, already within the central bank's official target. This year's inflation target is between 2.5 to 5.5 percent.

Tetangco expressed confidence that inflation would fall within the target this year and next, saying that the BSP projection target stands at 3.3 to 3.5 percent.

The central bank chief said that current monetary policy was sufficient to help boost the Philippine economy, which slowed down in the first quarter of 2009 to a growth of only 0.4 percent—the slowest pace in 14 years.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

As of July 29, 2009

CURRENCIES

July 29, 2009		Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	46.8700
Japan	Yen	0.0104	0.0106	0.4881
United Kingdom	Pound	1.6450	1.6450	77.0970
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1290	0.1290	6.0467
Switzerland	Franc	0.9248	0.9248	43.3501
Canada	Dollar	0.8579	0.8579	40.2103
Singapore	Dollar	0.6870	0.6870	32.2041
Australia	Dollar	0.8313	0.8313	38.9744
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0304	0.0304	1.4243
South Korea	Won	0.0008	0.0008	0.0375
Kuwait	Dinar	3.3333	3.3333	156.2333
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2667	0.2667	12.5013
UAE	Dirham	0.2723	0.2723	12.7599
Qatar	Riyal	0.2747	0.2747	12.8721
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6525	2.6525	124.3133
Oman	Rial	2.5974	2.5974	121.7395
China	Yuan	0.1464	0.1464	6.8600
Sweden	Krona	0.1203	0.1203	5.6385
Denmark	Krone	0.1800	0.1800	8.4366
India	Rupee	0.0210	0.0210	0.9847
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2811	0.2811	13.1742
Thailand	Baht	0.0291	0.0291	1.3650
New Zealand	Dollar	0.6219	0.6219	29.1447
Sweden	Krona	0.1203	0.1203	5.6385
Europe	Euro	1.4151	1.4151	66.3161

BOI, Peza investments down by 250% in H1

DTI keeping growth target for this year

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CORPORATE INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS received by the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority plunged by 250 percent to the first half to P79.67 billion, from P280.06 billion in the same period last year.

According to data from the Department of Trade and Industry, first-quarter investments came up to only P17.89 billion. Pledges picked up in the second quarter, however, to reach P61.7 billion.

Despite the slowdown in industry, Trade Secretary Peter Favila said the DTI would still keep its target on investment growth of up to 5 percent for the year.

"As the world economy begins to pull out of a recession, as shown by positive signs of generally improving economic and financial conditions in most economies worldwide, although at a staid pace, (we see) net inputs for a modest investment performance of the country in 2009," he said in a statement.

The approved investments in the first semester were for 240 projects that were expected to generate 93,593 jobs.

For the first six months, Trade Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez said the bulk of the investment commitments were for projects in the electricity, gas and water supply sectors with a total of P39.34 billion.

Information technology services inked in an additional P6.91 billion, while manufacturing contributed another P5.9 billion, he added.

The biggest investment registered in the January-June period came from the Aboitiz/ AP Renewables Inc. for the 747.5-megawatt (MW) Tiwi-MakBan geothermal power facilities in Bicol, Laguna and Batangas.

Investments in these projects come up to a total of P21.72 billion.

The construction of eight (8) casinos and one incubation building in Baguio City entailed a total investment of P3.96 billion, while the mass housing project of 20832 Project Developers added another P 3.62 billion to the investments committed pool.

The 17.5-MW project of Green Power Philippines Inc. added another P2.00 billion in total investment pledges for the period.

"Investments in the power sector, particularly in the renewable and green sector, bode well for the country as we aggressively address the future growth demands for energy in the near term. At the same time, we ensure that these are not only renewable but viable as well," Hernandez said.

Local investors were the biggest contributors to investments in the first half, pouring P69.97 billion into the economy, for a 78-percent share of total investment pledges in the first half.

The 22-percent balance was divided among Hong Kong businessmen with P3.91 billion, the Japanese with P1.52 billion, the Americans with P2.16 billion and the British with P2.13 billion.

Limay plant bid moved to end Aug.

By Arcy B. Buno

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. has pushed back the bidding for the 620-megawatt Limay coal-fired, coal-fired power plant in Bataan to mid-August this year.

The bidding was originally slated for this month, following the successful auction of the 600-MW Calaca coal-fired thermal power plant in Batangas.

PSALM spokesperson Conrad Tolentino said in an interview that the government was also needed time to thresh out and resolve the concerns raised by prospective investors before it could proceed with the bidding.

PSALM president Jose Ibazeta said that for the Limay power facility, time is there groups remained interested in the asset and were now conducting due diligence.

Aboitiz Power Corp. vice president Luis Miguel Aboitiz earlier said that a consortium had indicated its interest for the Limay facility but it had yet to decide whether or not to participate in the bidding.

Food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp., through affiliate San Miguel Energy Corp., had already dropped its bid for the diesel-run power facility.

San Miguel Energy consultant Marc Delis said the company found the conversion of the facility "expensive."

"At the same time, you'll have to build a new industry around it. You cannot just do it to serve your power requirements," Delis said.

Delis, however, said future negotiations over the Limay facility might be possible "because there's no one interested in it."

PSALM has been trying to privatize the Limay power plant since last year. However, the auction held in July 2008 and in January this year were both declared failed because only one company qualified for the bidding.

The Limay plant, commissioned in 1980, has two 316-MW modules. One composed of three 70-MW gas turbines and another made up of a 130-MW steam turbine.

BIR's H1 'sin' tax take down

By Roland W. Dasalla

SEN. PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO called on Congress to pass a law to raise tax rates, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said first-semester collection of excise tax on cohabacco products fell by almost a quarter year-on-year to P13.225 billion.

BIR data showed that the levy on tobacco products was 13.4 percent short of the P12.98 billion target for the period.

Further, collection of excise taxes on alcoholic beverages fell by 8.4% percent to P20.23 billion compared to the year-ago level.

But these collections still exceeded the P19.06 billion collection target for alcohol by 1.64 percent.

The Department of Finance has been pushing for the rationalization of excise taxes on both tobacco and alcohol, which would result in higher levies for such products.

Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran explained that the revenue goals for so-called sin products during the first half were lower than actual collection in 2008 on account of advanced withdrawals of stocks from warehouses.

"Companies front-loaded or withdrawn products from warehouses to beat the increase in the excise tax that took effect at the start of this year," Beltran said.

Hard-pressed to raise more revenues to fund the government's economic stimulus programs and deficit spending, the DOF has called on Congress for the immediate passage of a new law hoisting unexpected revenues of P200 billion in the first year.

In January, Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said a DOF proposal to rationalize excises has, among similar proposed measures, the biggest revenue impact of between P130 billion and P200 billion in the first four years.

This DOF proposed that rationalization of excises must catch a run-out scheme in the first year of implementation, which would progress in to a single tax rate starting in the second year.

Additional excise tax collection would range from P60.9 billion to P70 billion yearly from the fifth year onwards.

Back then, Teves said higher tax rates should be implemented as soon as possible considering the urgent need for greater revenues to finance deficit spending aimed at stimulating continued economic growth.

But earlier this month, before he said the DOF had softened its stance following consultations with industry players.

He said the DOF has acquiesced to consumers' request that a new law on tax rates should be implemented no sooner than 2012.

Beltran said the the industry bids that no earlier passage and implementation of such tax proposal based on Congress would ensure the strong time considering the global economic crisis.

Agriculture exports seen to grow by 18%

By Rita T. Clichando

SUGAR AGRICULTURAL EXports from the Philippines are expected to reach $4.5 billion this year, representing an 18 percent increase over the previous year's level, according to an official of the Department of Agriculture.

Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup said on the second day of the Food Exhibition January 2009 that the fresh produce would still be the main growth driver for 2009.

The Philippines exported $3.8 billion worth of agricultural products in 2008.

He said that the top agricultural exports will be mangoes, bananas, coconut, pineapple, seaweeds and marine culture.

Okra, Salacup said, will be among the top export earners since the Japanese market has lifted restrictions on Philippine shipments.

This could make okra exports rebound to anywhere from 2,000 tons to 3,000 tons in 2009 from 1,425 tons in 2008.

Rene Dizon, head of the Philippine Okra Producers and Exporters Association, cites sales to Japan—the largest market for okra worldwide—dropped to 1,425 tons in 2008 from 2,300 tons in 2006 and 1,680 tons in 2007. The group said this was caused by 17 cases of chemical residue detection in Philippine okra.

Processed food will also be a good earner since these products command higher prices compared to fresh food.

In the case of okra, for example, the value-added version of this vegetable can be marketed outside Japan to expand sales prospects. The European Union and the United States are being targeted as potential markets.

WTO talks over RP tax sought

BRUSSELS—THE EUROPEAN Union's executive said on Wednesday it had asked for talks with the Philippines at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over that country's taxes on spirits, which the European Union regards as discriminatory.

"Imported spirits including Spanish brandy and Scotch whisky can face taxes 18 to 30 times higher than those on domestic products, and exports to the Philippines have fallen significantly as a result," the European Commission said in a statement. Reuters

Gov't considers ₱200B for ERP2

By Nico T. Olivenares

THE GOVERNMENT MAY INJECT P200BI... [illegible] into the economy next year to stimulate spending and job creation, on top of the P330 billion stimulus under this year's Economic Resiliency Plan (ERP).

National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Director General Ralph Recto said yesterday on the sidelines of the Bond Industry Summit that economic managers would meet today to discuss ERP2 or the second phase of the stimulus plan.

Recto said that the breakdown of funding has not been finalized, but the bulk of the spending would still go to infrastructure and social protection.

"It all begins with what your target is (and) what can you afford to spend next year. More or less, we are talking of P200-billion additional," Recto said.

Second phase of resiliency plan gets underway

Under this year's ERP, about P360 billion was from an increase in the 2009 budget; this funds small, community-level infrastructure projects and social protection measures; P80 billion was from tax cuts for low and middle income earners (P28 billion) and the scheduled cut in corporate income taxes (P22 billion) as provided in the Revised Value-Added Tax Law; P100 billion was from government financial institutions and social security institutions to finance large infrastructure projects; and P30 billion in additional benefits to members of social security institutions taken from the pay hikes, condolences and claims/benefits.

Recto said that the ERP would be benchmarked in the third quarter "to stretch every peso in the budget, (and) make the (total) gov-ment effective."

He acknowledged that the national budget would not likely be balanced as scheduled.

"We are still reviewing all those numbers but clearly, you will still have a deficit next year. It would be lower than this year, but you will still have a deficit," Recto said.

The deficit is expected to narrow next year to around 2.5 percent to 2.8 percent of gross domestic product through a combination of fiscal discipline and a recovery in the global economy.

BSP open to lending funds to 'white knights'

By Michelle V. Bono

THE (BSP) SENTRAL NG Pilipinas said it was considering the possibility of granting loans to banks that would act as "white knights" and take over weak rural banks.

This is in keeping with the BSP policy promoting the consolidation of the rural banking sector, so that only the stronger banks would survive.

"There is a program that we are preparing together with the PDIC (Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.). We are looking at granting incentives to those who are willing to acquire smaller rural banks," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday in a briefing.

Tetangco said consolidation was one way of helping restore stability of the country's banking sector, especially the rural banking industry.

He said that generally, rural banks have held up well despite the global economic turmoil.

The rural banking industry's average capital adequacy ratio stood at 13.67 percent as of end-June 2008, exceeding the minimum of 10 percent required by the BSP.

While a number of rural banks have closed down because of financial troubles, Tetangco said the number was small compared to the total rural banking industry.

The BSP said there were 700 rural banks as of the end of last year.

The BSP governor also said the central bank was open to allowing rural banks in the offshore microinsurance products to beef up their income.

Vivant eyes deal to supply power to Palawan co-op

By Arcy R. Reyes

VIVANT ENERGY CORP. PLANS TO BID FOR the contract to provide electricity to the Barangay Island Electric Cooperative in Palawan.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, parent firm Vivant Corp. said its wholly-owned subsidiary would participate in the solicitation process to be conducted by Baseco.

The submission of technical and financial bids is scheduled for Sept. 9.

Vivant said the winning bidder would be awarded a 15-year agreement to supply power in Baseco's franchise area covering Pamantigan and Cullion islands in Palawan.

Vivant Energy owns 35 percent of Delta P Inc., an independent power producer in Palawan. It also owns 50 percent of Cebu Private Power Corp., another IPP covering Cebu City and has a 40-percent stake in shower holdings Inc., a joint venture with Absolut Power Corp.

In addition to investments in power generation, parent firm Vivant Corp. owns 21.66 percent of Visayan Electric Co. Inc. (Visco), which distributes electricity in Cebu City.

Separate National Power Corp. currently supplies the electricity requirements of Baseco, one of the two distribution utilities in Palawan.

Palawan is one of the provinces served by Napocor's small power utilities group (SPUG) - Napocor's subsidiary which in this case acts that provides electricity to remote islands and inland barangays that are not connected to the main grids.

Napocor has been trying to privatize areas under SPUG to bring down its expenses.

Lower subsidies to SPUG areas could also help bring down power rates paid by customers serviced by the main grids, as they are partially shouldering the subsidies.

Of the so-called 14 "first-wave" islands shortlisted for privatization, nine are already under New Power Providers, namely: Oriental Mindoro; Batanes; Biliran; Basilan; Romblon; Camotes; Siquijor; Guimaras; Dinagat and Siargao.

Shares close 1.25% ... From page B1

comes (of most listed companies) haven't gone down," he added.

Medjebovsky's trade was driven mainly by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) after a local newspaper speculated that one of its two key shareholders would offer to buy the other one and delist it from the PSE.

"Meralco is not in a position to comment on speculations about the company or any action to be taken by any of its shareholders," the utility told the exchange in a letter.

Meralco, accounting for 56 percent of turnover, surged 6.26 percent to P295.

Megaworld Corp. added 0.37 percent to 0.27.20 while Ayala Corp. gained 1.00 percent to P300. AFP

Power plant component makes Laiban ... From page B1

South Cotabato I Electric Cooperative, Inc.

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Norwegian consultants also based Angat to be sitting on the extended Maribina fault line, concluding that the level of risk of having a single source of water exposed to earthquake risk was "unacceptable."

Other studies conducted in recent as 2007 by foreign consultancy project that Manila's water requirement will rise to 5,600 million liters per day (MLD), overwhelming Angat's 4,000 MLD maximum capacity. Thus, the projected 1,600 MLD deficit fits almost perfectly into Laiban's maximum supply capacity of 1,998 MLD.

Proponent's plan

Despite this, Ang admits that the project, by itself, will not yield a significant return on investments—the same conclusion supposedly rendered by Maynilad Water Services Inc. when it decided to pass up on offer to undertake the Laiban project two years ago, according to sources.

"There's not much money in water," he said, noting that the projected 1728 per cubic meter selling price of Laiban's water may even come down once bagging suits regulators begin.

"But my idea is to build a power plant beside the dam [to generate electricity] which we can sell," Ang said. "That's where we [will] earn money to make the project viable."

Under Ang's plan [illegible] the run-of-river 3,000-megawatt "peaking plant" that will pump water up the dam at night when demand for power is low, and use the water falling over the dam during daytime to power turbines that will generate hydroelectric power.

"We will pump water up at night at the rate of [illegible] hours," said Ang, who is also a mechanical engineer by training. "Then we will let water flow down and generate electricity by day when it sells for [illegible] kilowatt hour. As you see, will we make money or not?"

The revisions began soon after negotiations were concluded, starting with Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto presenting the deals alleged government guarantees, and the process' lack of transparency.

No challenger

However, MWSS Administrator Diosdado Jose Allado said his agency had obtained the legal opinion of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, which ruled that the agreement with San Miguel did not constitute a government guarantee.

He also said that MWSS followed—to the letter—standard joint venture guidelines issued by no less than the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), including Neda's rule on providing for a seven-day period within which prospective challengers could acquire bid documents from the MWSS.

"We were required by law to publish this notice in one newspaper of general circulation," Allado said. "We went beyond this and published in three newspapers: The Inquirer, Star and Bulletin."

Recto said he was surprised the eighteen days of interest in the Laiban Dam project. "No one even came to our offices to take a peep at, much less buy, the bid documents," he added.

The window for potential challengers closed on July 8, with one a single party coming forward to challenge San Miguel's offer.

Ang, however, said they have also received calls from interested parties after the deadline, and the [illegible] started and now to been given. "It [illegible]."

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

INFRA LAGER No. 2009-03

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A

July 24, 2009

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	Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Nationality	Position
1.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible] Japanese	President
2.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible] Japanese	Vice President (Office/Accounting Department)
3.	[illegible]	[illegible]	Marketing Manager
4.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible]	Administrative Manager
5.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible]	Teacher
6.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible]	Learning Manager
7.	[illegible]	Mr. [illegible]	CEO Consultant

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application please communicate with this Regional Office.

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Pag-Ibig City to rise in Tacloban City

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A LOCAL DEVELOPER will now soon its P300-million subdivision project here, which will be financed by the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig).

Herdelia B. Monzon, Pag-Ibig regional manager for Eastern Visayas, said recently that the project, which would be called Pag-Ibig City, would be the third to be developed by Pembres Corporation using Pag-Ibig funds.

Located in Barangay Bagacay, about 12 km from the Tacloban city proper, Pag-Ibig City would have 745 housing units.

Monzon said that Pag-Ibig Fund has set aside P150 million for the region this year for home seeker (subdivision or interest-rate) development program.

This is double the P60-million that the Pag-Ibig allotted last year for subdivision development in the region.

Bernie Villablanca, chief of the housing loan division of Pag-Ibig in Eastern Visayas, said he expected the developer to finish about 80 percent of the housing units by the end of this year.

Aside from the Pembres Corporation projects, Pag-Ibig also provided funding for ongoing subdivision projects, such as the VGA subdivision and the Carbahogan Executive Heights in Carbahogan, Isabel and the Regina Heights and Villa Bias Subdivision in Tacloban City.

Villablanca said some local government units have also availed themselves of the Pag-Ibig developmental loans.

Projects include the First Binary Housing Project in Basey, Samar, and the subdivision projects of the provincial government in Catarman, Northern Samar.

Cordillera finishes last in '08 economic output

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

Slowdown linked to drop in agri, industry

BAGUIO CITY—THE CORDILLERA ended last year at the bottom of the list of regional economic performance and government economists are trying to figure out why.

Data from the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) showed a sharp slowdown in the growth of the region's 2008 gross regional domestic product or GRDP, at 1.8 percent, from 7.3 percent in 2007.

Jose Ingles, Cordillera director of the National Economic and Development Authority, attributed the lower growth to the decline in farm revenues, as well as the adverse effects of the US recession on top semiconductor exporters like Texas Instruments Philippines Inc. (TIPI) in Baguio City.

The Cordillera often heavily on profit generated by the Baguio City Economic Zone (BCEZ) where TIPI operates, said NSCB Cordillera director Benjamin Navarro, "so we really have to keep a close watch on [BCEZ] this year" to see how the region will fare.

The BCEZ revenues represent more than 50 percent of the region's total manufacturing output.

The industry sector, meanwhile, accounts for 34.7 percent of the Cordillera's economy, Navarro said.

The Cordillera groups Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Apayao, Kalinga and Mt. Province.

But he acknowledged that the region also suffered from a drop in agriculture growth from 19.5 percent in 2007 to just 2.3 percent last year, which puzzled experts.

High value commodities identified with the region, such as vegetables and coffee, were among the region's worst performers last year, he said.

He added that he would need to consult officials of the Department of Agriculture to understand why Cordillera commodities failed the regional economy.

The slowdown cut across other industries like mining, another Cordillera staple.

The lackluster performance of the metals sector dragged down the value of semiconductor products that rely on gold.

NSCB records said the value of this sector's products were already down by 8.8 percent in 2007, and slid further by 17.7 percent last year.

Tourism, which supports the economy of many Cordillera towns, grew last year by 8.9 percent, a slowdown from the 12.3 percent recorded in 2007.

Navarro said the region's economy has always been unpredictable because of an erratic growth pattern over the last 10 years.

Economists and historians, who participated in a July 23 forum on Baguio's growth potential at the University of the Philippines Baguio, had similar insights.

Gladys Cruz, a UP economics professor, said "economic growth [in the Cordillera] is a drive of agglomeration [or an unruly mass] ... because of the Baguio-centric nature of Cordillera growth."

Reading a paper she and economist Bienvenido Ingeng Jr. wrote, Cruz said the region's average GRDP had been hovering at 3 percent, except for 2006 and 2007 when economists recorded a 7.4-percent growth.

The improved GRDP of 2007, Cruz said, "was not a balanced growth" as investments were concentrated in Baguio City with just a small portion going to other Cordillera provinces.

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FACILITATED BY TRIXIE O. SILERIO, PEOPLESTRONG MANAGING CONSULTANT

GET HIRED, GET AHEAD! Training Program Schedule:
Session 2 : August 4, 2009 Session 3 : August 12, 2009
Session 4 : August 13, 2009

TIME: 12:30 - 6 PM
VENUE: Inquirer Multi-Purpose Hall
PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City

MyVote.MyTurn.

HOW I WILL DECIDE

The Inquirer keeps me informed. The 2010 election is really about _____ (KEY TOPIC/S).

Our next president needs to be someone capable of _____ (CHARACTER TRAIT) like _____ (POLITICAL HERO), and not capable of _____ (POLITICAL SCANDAL).

No one knows for sure what will happen. But I will make my vote happen.

NAME:
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E-MAIL OR TEL. NO.:
GENDER: AGE:

Fill out, Clip, **Send to 2010elections@inquirer.com.ph. Fax to 897 4811.**
Or send **SMS**: Type 2010 Name/Address/Not Topic/Character Trait/Political Hero/Political Scandal/I will decide **to 0918 888 5566.**

INQUIRER

Monthly, our Research Department will collate the results which will be printed in the Inquirer. Entries filled with good-thinking/eureka ideas/innovative approach/ provocative opinion will receive surprise prizes.

IN THIS ISSUE
So easy-to-bake Japanese choco bread /D1

LIFESTYLE Food
Editor Thelma Sevese San Jose

Delores Custer takes Manila's foodies by storm

By Vergie Bags-Reyes

CUSTER in action

MORE THAN 500 participants stooped to Sunset Pavilion of Sofitel Philippine Plaza last Saturday for the biggest food-styling seminar ever held in the country, conducted by internationally renowned and most-in-demand food stylist Delores Custer.

As far as events go, it went way beyond expectations.

As early as 7 a.m., participants from as far south as Cebu, Aklan, Leyte, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Cotabato City, and Davao, and as far north as Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Benguet and Baguio City, gathered at the registration desk, two hours before the session.

The sponsors, too, were jetting in from the Baguio Oil Refinery Corp. and Italy, Center for Culinary Arts Manila and Oriental (The Center for Culinary Arts Manila Restaurant and Events Place), Ebel Ocena, 3M Honeywell, Food Avenue Hotel, Unilever (peanut butter), Tourism Authority of Thailand and Sofitel.

The participants brought their own knives, potato chips and Mr. Kitkat foods for the hands-on segment.

Back by popular demand, Custer was on her third visit here to share with Filipinos food-styling prepa-

Behind every picture-perfect plate of food is a food stylist, she said—and she proved it

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PHOTO and FURNITURE EXHIBIT
JULY 24 - AUGUST 2
by KAUTOF KALIKASAN and MIAN NANIL
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CUSTER with the Sofitel team headed by resident manager Wolfram and executive chef Mario Bankel

PACKED house at the Sunset Pavilion of Sofitel Philippine Plaza

WITH SPONSORS and friends, San Miguelenses (Bliss), Tuba de Veyra (Gold Circus Pitch), Mary Grapes, Reinelle de los Santos (Glue), Norma Chikiamco, Mike Cheong, Tina and Sue Zaragoza of Bookcafe

Delores Custer
takes Manila's foodies by storm

From page C1

and technique for pasting cakes, pies, tarts, pizza and pasta.

Power crowd

The audience was a power crowd—chefs John Cu-Unjieng, Mel-Jose Baylo, Daisybe Barretto, Jonathan Bautista, Olivier Limoux, Timothy Mill Abdulah, Joanne Limcaoco; students and instructors (CCA, Culinary Institute of Asia, Enderun, Center for Asian Culinary Arts Garden); art directors, photographers, interior stylists, food consultants, food stylists and food technologists.

All believe that behind almost every Bordeau, picture-perfect plate of food is a magazine, cookbook or TV is a food stylist.

The food stylist makes food look "alive" in photographs, Custer said.

Custer discussed the latest trends in food styling—going natural and using real food; how to deal with difficult food, the use of color and texture for maximum effect, and theorizing for film and camera. She demonstrated food styling dos and don'ts.

Custer cautioned Mary Grapon was busy at one side of the stage with photographer Mike Cheong and Tina Zaragoza, rising food styling props.

Before lunch break, Custer challenged the audience to create their own food styling with random food items on plates.

Custer had a nice, quiet lunch backstage with good friend and Fujitsan Food coordinator Florine Chikiamco, who was Custer's student at the Culinary Institute of America in New York, and a newfound friend, Persian-Iranian model Dora Dhoda de Jesus Gomez, who came all the way from Bukidnon.

Tricks of the trade

In the afternoon, Custer conducted a Q&A, moderated by Inquirer executive Chito Sta. Romana.

Custer showed the ways to achieve great results, depending on available resources, to make food look prettier, shinier, tastier, fluffier or just generally more appetizing.

The audience ate it was to Custer presented some tricks of the trade. She sprayed water mixed with syrup to shrivelless glisten for that "chilled" look. A hot shower was used to add grill marks to grilled meat.

The audience was so impressed with how the did a whipped cream dollop that they burst into applause.

Though the session ended at 5 p.m., the socializing went on for at least another hour. Everyone wanted autographs from Custer and Grapes—and both happily obliged. Camera, too, clicked endlessly as fun after fun posed for photographs with the American food stylists.

By one total house emptyhanded. Aside from the lovely handouts, free lunch and a years cup of Bukidnon coffee courtesy of Don Marino Gaston, each participant got a certificate of attendance and free bags.

What they say

Jacqueline Abejo of Nikel Dairy Farms: "She's really really good. Her expertise is very broad, and it's an expertise you can tell comes from developing confidence and experience. She can look at an object from different angles. It's very logical and applicable."

Dorothy Pereira, cookbook author and lighting technician: "I love it when she encouraged everyone not to be stagnant. To always look for new trends. In terms of color pops you around your—the show windows and the color combinations."

Claude Tayag, artist, restaurateur and writer: "I attended her first seminar in 2006 but totally forgot the lecture. Now it's like a refresher course for me. She's very much more that now than most people trying their hand at food styling."

Chef Jonathan Benitez, CCA: "Her presentation will definitely help me in food presentations. It's also nice to see how she presented the food the chef's way and in a home-style way."

BENEDICTINE monk Dom Marino Gaston

CHEF John Cu-Unjieng

JACQUELINE Abejo won a raffle prize from Elite.

CUSTER chats with participants during the hands-on segment.

THE KITCHEN setup was provided by Elite.

Chef John Cu-Unjieng, food consultant: "It's my first time to attend Custer's seminar. I was surprised to see over 100 people today. I was expecting to find a lot of students, but I also saw a lot of people in the restaurant business and existing companies. It's well worth it."

Tom Marlo Gomez: "The session was absolutely fantastic and helpful. Once a month we have a food catering project called brunch with the monks in the garden of the monastery after the 8 a.m. Mass. It started three years ago with 30 people. Now we serve 200 people.

After three years, we've gathered a lot of recipes and we hope to put them in a recipe book. When I read Custer's food styling session in the Internet I already knew a lot. Still, I would like to improve my style so I would really be helpful to us. All of these are useful and applicable to our book project."

Capturing the perfect beef stew and avoiding paella's fake look

By Yvonne Rego-Reyes

A DAY AFTER SHE SUCCESSfully food-styling pendant or fork for the Philippine Plaza, Delores Custer was off to attend a cooking class in Bangkok, courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The Qatar-in-the-contour was lured, and many were always 500-plus participants who all wanted more tips from Custer.

We caught Custer right before the left for Bangkok for the Q&A:

Were you expecting the huge crowd?

No. My first two visits were kind of small. Now, it has grown.

Why do you think the interest in food styling has gotten this big?

Because of Manny [Calimlim] and Inquirer. We wanted to stop a broader audience, not just people who wanted to be food stylists but also those who owned restaurants or planned to do cookbooks, for instance. I tried to be fairly general in my talk. But I also tried to be more specific in the afternoon, especially on what kind of food pictures work.

You said pie is untouched and raw steak food, later you showed how to take food stylist. A few hours? But is a contradiction.

"I don't think it was a contradiction. Even when I showed them how to style a pizza, I prepared and used natural pizza. With the fake ice cream, milk and iced tea, I just threw in stand in before shooting the real thing. They need to know how to make fake stuff so that when it's time to shoot the real thing, everything is all ready and you don't have a celeb like Paulilla of ice cream all over the place.

I haven't run across an advertiser of turkey or chicken who want to advertise their product with wrinkled skin or sprouted ducts. They still want to have that perfect look. But, if I'm choosing a chicken for a magazine like Bon Appetit, they want it natural-ish and, 99% sure know how to work in both models.

A lot of people asked you how to present beef stew beautifully. Why the focus on it?

I always get that question in my sessions here. Maybe because it's something that's very hard to make—into look-ing—very dark and brown. In the US, we don't show pictures of that very often because it's not one of our national dishes, unlike here.

What's your take on digital photos or #nofoodscript? How are you affected by it?

"In quite a few ways, most of them positive. I was looking at some photos of Nigella's cookbooks yesterday and most of them were really bread-like. She said they used film, not digital. That really makes the difference.

I don't think there's quite as much depth in digital as in film. But digital photos can be easily corrected. If we are shooting a cheesecake and a little of cream goes too far, they can take a picture of it and bring it back up again. Before, we'd have another cheesecake ready or we'd have to clean up the mess and re-do. Digital has made it easier for us. The food is fresher and I think we just have more fun. It makes me like cooking.

One thing we must be concerned about, though, is ethics.

As an director or a photographer will ask, can we make the food a little bigger or add chips to the cookie, but if it isn't told that way that's an ethical issue. Component-wise been tared for overpromising. We must be responsible for what we show and what we promise.

Is there such a thing as badly styled food?

Yes. I have a couple of things I call "grill marks that all shown." where I've seen some really ugly grill marks and it was just somebody who didn't do a good job or didn't know how to do it. It looks like it's very easy to do—heat coherent and put it down on the grate. But you must have the right tools. You must make it look natural and real. I also have a "watery ball of cream." I once saw a bakery ad with a sliced piece of meat taken all the breast, sliced down and then topped with two more slices.

You could almost see where it was added and taken off. It wasn't for real. The skin was pulled back from the shoulder and looked very bad.

Also, new food stylists always make a mistake with paella. Every pot is carefully placed on top. You can see it looks so cramped, not round. That don't make it look good. If you toss pots and rice together, you'll have rice on top of the pots to some places that looks more real.

Another thing, if a chef is styling food for home economists, comes later, he or she has trouble making the product look like for home economists. The chef can't let go of his or her darkroom!

Can a chef be a good food stylist?

Yes. They just must know when food looks ready to look like a chef did it, and when it needs to look like a person at home did it.

But you don't have to be chef to be a food stylist?

No, but you must know how to cook and bake, really really well to the book. I'm writing now [Food Styling: The Art of Preparing Food] for the Center's. I put down about at least 10 important attributes to be a good food stylist. People keep asking me what makes a good food stylist. The first thing I list is, he/she should be a good cook and a baker. A lot of people don't want to put in time to learn those skills. That's wrong.

Another thing is, don't rush. Don't be too anxious to get a career and make money in our business. If you do not do well in the job they won't hire you again. Also, your plate/appearance is important. Getting with you. You must work as a team. You must be a good team player.

One question from the audience I didn't get to answer was, what happens when you don't agree with the art director or photographer? I would say it depends on what it is we don't agree on. If the world is not going to stop and this is for art director's job, I say okay. Maybe I don't like this style, but it's not a life-and-death situation. It's just a picture.

French bistro food cooked by Filipina

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Tantoy

MY CELEBRATION OF Bastille Day (July 14) began at 7:8 in the evening. And the place was La Cabane sur/Bassy Road, where the French flag was positioned right at the door.

The lady of the house was the one cooking, a Filipina married to a Frenchman.

Evelina Pandaia cooks French bistro food but she was also generous every dish: a hot boudoir, Thirty, 86 does one want to change the flavors to suit the Filipino palate, she said. She learns them her cheese in-law whenever they vacation in Corsica, although Thierry's family is also from Lyon, reputed to be the culinary capital of France. He wishes that they could get the Corsican sausages and other cheese for Korea will make a difference, but they will work with what is available and do it the French way.

Accompaniments were fried potatoes (*pommes frites*) or potato gratin with lasso of cheese, or salad greens baptized with a bit of dressing. There were no alternatives to dishes.

The confit de canard was fried perfectly the dark leg crisp outside and tender inside and not too salty. The bouef bourguignon was what one would expect of stew that's been slow-cooked, the wine melding into the sauce and the beef tender.

I liked the skewered grilled lamb because it was light, not dainty. The salads were what you would expect from French bistros—sufficient in soil, with dressings that don't overwhelm the leaves, a palate cleanser just in case you eat the French way by having it at the end of the meal.

EVELINA and Thierry Pandaia

Steak tartare

My Bastille Day discovery was the steak tartare. I recently have the honor to eat at many restaurants offer this or do this properly (Le Souffle Rockwell does). The chopped raw beef was seasoned perfectly (although my French friend wanted it spicier) and it was great with the fried potatoes.

And now to the wines. Thierry chooses wines the restaurants carries according to Evelina. He will not tell when he drinks doesn't make the grade—even if the distributor is a friend, she said.

But if there's one thing that will keep me going back to the place, it's the lemon pie (*tarte au citron*). It isn't too cool, it's light and is packed with crafter or not.

But what does "la cabane" mean? It's what country wooden houses are called in France. The exterior doesn't show it and the digs outside is nondescript, but inside, it does have a homey atmosphere with wooden tables and chairs with natural though colored finish. Its area dominated with solar and low lights can be a function room or a place where one can have a glass of wine and appetizers like tasty tidbits. The restaurant is also a display area of Thierry's other business, furniture exports.

La Cabane Rustic Bar is located at 102F14, Arnaiz (Pasay Road), across Park Square. Call 844.3277/843-8813.

E-mail pinoyfood84@yahoo.com.

CACS Recreational Courses August 2009

Aug 2 SUN: Chinese Mooncake Workshop 1 – Let Chef Lucia Cordero Chef Adrian Lim guide you in the fine art of making mooncake with a twist in the Asian Chefs Mooncake Serving Suite. Brunch Included. Sugar Added to Taste. Price: 2,000 Private Parties. Minimum Size Accommodated: 4 People. Maximum Number: 8 People. Class Days: Chef Eric, Richard Chua and Chef Adrian of Chinese Mooncake. Time: 10:00 Hours. 3pm.

Aug 2 SUN: Sausage Workshop 1 – Let Chef Gerald Quek guide you in the fine art of making sausages in this cooking workshop. Activities: White Sausage, Chicken Sausage, Fresh Cheese Sausage, Sausage Cooking Tips, Sauces, Chicken Sausage, Pasta Sausage, Sausage Platter, English Sausages. Fee: 2,500 Time: 10am-3pm.

Aug 7 FRI: Catering & Entertaining 3pm with 1 – Let Chef Gerald Quek and Chef Lucia Cordero guide you in the fine art of catering and entertaining. Activities: Menu Planning, Table Setting, Food Presentation, Sugar Craft, Food Display, Entertaining Tips, Sauces, Chicken Sausage, Pasta Sausage, Sausage Platter, English Sausages. Fee: 2,500 Time: 10am-3pm.

Aug 8 SAT: Chinese Steam Cooking 1 – Learn the ways to steam foods and Chinese cooking with Chef Adrian Lim in this workshop. Steamed Items: Steamed Fish, Steamed Vegetables, Steamed Dumplings and Steamed Rice. Fee: 2,000 Time: 10:00am-3:00pm.

Aug 15 SAT: Tools, Italian 1 – Restaurant Technique. Italy is what Italy's Chef Chino Chiarugi is famous for. His unique and authentic Asian Chef with Italian cooking Italian dishes that is delicious and easy to cook. Italian Dishes: Italian Chicken Cacciatore, Italian Pasta Carbonara, Italian Pasta Bolognese, Italian Salad, Italian Dessert & Coffee. Brunch Included. Sugar Added to Taste. Price: 2,000 Private Parties. Minimum Size Accommodated: 4 People. Maximum Number: 8 People. Class Days: Chef Eric, Richard Chua and Chef Adrian of Chinese Mooncake. Time: 10:00 Hours. 3pm.

Aug 15 SUN: Cake Decorating Workshop – Let Chef Gerald Quek guide you in the fine art of cake decorating. Activities: Cake Decorating Tips, Icing Techniques, Cake Design, Cake Decorating Tools, Cake Decorating Tips, Cake Decorating Techniques

Thai herbal-coated rice perfect for kebabs

RICEbran oil

BRAHMI OFFERS OVER A HUNdred rice varieties, brown-grown and imported.

Some not-seen corner that has every kind of rice grain that suits every palate and rice recipe anyone can think of.

The story is the brainchild of Bessie Tan, who belongs to a family of rice growers. Inspired by/Driven by/Addicted to do something different, she had started a clothing line called Rhind.

It was in a meeting with the Ayala group about his Rhind venture that the inertia plan for Market! Market! was revealed to him.

This gave him the idea of a store with a vast display of rice varieties from all over the world, similar to the love for the vine in Alsatia.

Adhering to the one town-one product concept, Bigasan San Tiao was (finger). Championed Blond (Cordillera—as used to add drama, Black, the only GCG-certified organic rice plantation).

For seasonal types include Dinorado (Marilao, Nueva Ecija and Bataan), Pink Diamond (Negri) and Midnight Sungsong (Bikolano and Palawan).

Speaking of midnight, the store is a haven for the megabalanoi. There are Sticky Rice from Vietnam and Thailand, Black Glutinous Rice, Japanese Mochi Rice and local varieties from Palawan and Mindoro. Bukidnon Pinamulang for pale humming and like fantastic pinipig.

They also have specialty rice for congee, varieties perfect for fried rice, freshly milled/chilled brown rice, brown's rice for pets, and even quaint rice for people on a budget.

8-herbs

A most interesting discovery is 8-herbs, herbal-coated rice from Thailand, which helps improve one's health. It has been tested and studied by Kasetsart University in cooperation with Bangkok Thai Market Co., Ltd.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Info, just re-try the nutritional rich traits of Kalinga native rice blended with butterbean, dark-colored glutinous rice), Green Mineral Rice and Organic Red Rice 200. Is-

HERBAL Rice. Bumble. Butterfly Pea. Turmeric. Pandan

Khaek grains are available in beautiful colors and distinctive flavors.

• Bumble contains flavonoids, proanthocyanin, organic acid, caffeine and vitamins C and D. It's used in making anti-spasmodic beverages in Thai medicine; it is used for the treatment of hypolipidemia, hyperviscosity, gastric ulceration and due to removal of bladder stones. It is also used for insect-an exudation.

• Turmeric has active substances—polyphenol and curcumin, a strong antioxidant. In Ayurveda, turmeric blocks inflammation, neutralizes that and improves the heart.

• Pandan or pandanus extract has a delightful scent and gives the rice a lovely fragrance. Pandanus is known for its healing properties and cooling effect. It is excellent for the treatment of internal inflammation, urinary infections, skin diseases and colds.

• Butterfly Pea is rich in blue Proanthocyanin, a natural antioxidant.

The Khaek line includes cereal grains with herbal rice in four variants: garlic known for its antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal effects; turmeric, rich in spice and capsaicin, a phytochemical said to "warm and improve blood circulation, relieve muscle pain and speed up fat metabolism." Chili is also an antioxidant rich in vitamin C, and green tea, a powerful antioxidant effective in lowering cholesterol.

I am experimenting with the 8-herbs in rice. Tested the nutritionist with my Adobo and it was perfect. Instead of using 1 c rice to 1 1/4 c water, I had it brown with a 1 c to 1 1/2 c water ratio. I'll share my recipes in my next column.

Rice bran oil

Thanks to Tao, rice bran oil is now available. I've been trying to consume it primarily for its high smoking point, 490° F, great for frying chicken and tempura.

But, as Thai research shows, rice bran oil is "rich in vitamin E, oryzanol, monounsaturated fatty acid and contains 0% trans fatty acids."

Bigasan—Ritzco Bld. 8C (#63.8366223; 8.8Ming Id: 86.65552 Market! Market! tel. 4867792.

On Aug. 29, I'm conducting a culinary tour in Bali.

For inquiries about my cooking class schedule and my line-up for the Degustation, Buffet, Coffee and Beverage and Asia Beyond (Traditional Philippine Gastro) series, call 9240294 / 8273000 Direct and 6474744 / 8908.2372 Int'l. Direct.

E-mail the author at reap@philippine.com.ph.

LIFESTYLE Food

So easy-to-bake Japanese choco bread

D.I.Y.

D.CHOCO Choux

By Vergie Baga-Reyes

AN IDEAL WEEKEND SWEET baking could yield this delicious Japanese bread for the family.

"There's nothing more relaxing than doing your own dough, raising and kneading it to a nice, elastic consistency, seeing it grow, adding your favorite chocolate filling, and smelling the breath-inducing goodness.

D.Choco Choux is a delightful Japanese bread swirling with chocolate ganache filling, drizzled with confectionery sugar on top.

"It's a very satisfying chocolate snack," says Zeny B. Cabrera, research and developmental manager of Dreamer Bun (Mel Mall of Asia, Ramirez and Tomas Morato, QC). "It's one of the favorites in the store. It has a fluffy cookie crust and the chocolate filling can be any of your favorite chocolate spread. You can do the kneading in a bread machine or by hand."

To make a cookie crust, crush about 45 pieces (500 g) of chocolate cookies to powder form. Use a food processor or blender to make it extra. Add ½ cup (118 g) butter or margarine and mix all.

If you want to make your own chocolate ganache instead of using a chocolate spread, you can try this: Place 250 g bittersweet chocolate in mixing bowl and set aside. In saucepan combine 2 c of heavy cream or all-purpose cream, 2 tbsp glucose, and 1 tbsp

SEE RECIPE ON PAGE D2

1 **PREHEAT** oven to 180°C. Sieve or strain all dry ingredients in large mixing bowl. Add fresh yeast. Mix all. Pour water gradually and mix into the dry ingredients.

2 **MIX** until a soft dough is formed. Add shortening/butter. Transfer mixture to work surface and knead dough until gluten is formed (smooth texture). Form dough into a ball.

3 **FLATTEN** dough and put chocolate spread/ganache at the corner of the dough.

4 **FORM** dough into a bottom and cut dough into desired portion. Form into ball. Rest for 15 minutes.

5 **GATHER** edges of the dough toward the center and pinch the edges and to seal. Knead the dough until uniform in color (chocolate brown). Do you can place dough in mixer.

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Romantic discussions are likely to occupy your attention today. Make sure you don't make promises that you can't keep. It's time to start making changes on professional matters.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you're striving to do, be careful about spending. In all your activities, be economical. Nonetheless, you're sort of afraid of yourself. There's a tendency to be extravagant today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be careful with your romantic feelings. It's very easy for you to be wounded also for business and economic matters. Nevertheless, avoid overthinking to make sure you have good feelings.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You feel unusually optimistic today! Nevertheless, be careful you don't go too far in making promises to others or attempt to do something you can't accomplish. You have good ambitions today!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel pleased and confident today. Nevertheless, be careful in your sign. Attractive opportunities and people to meet. Keep a cool head to deal with groups and organizations!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're enthusiastic about big goals and plans for the future today. This is a good thing; nevertheless, make sure your feet are on the ground. Be alert to realities.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Some conversations with bosses, parents and VIPs today. However, be careful it's very easy to be a target in your own mind today. Stay!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel unusually talk about religion and social issues, and of kinds of cultural matters today. Be sure your words today. Your without such high almost outlandish others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Don't let the pressure of things that can't control get to you. Be disciplined and you'll be able to do. Be creative about your work. Others, especially in discussions with partners and close friends. You'll be tempted to say something out of pleasure somewhere.

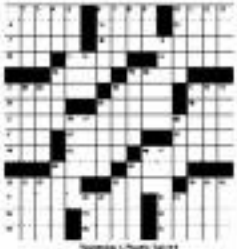
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't make the mistake of thinking that you're always right. Others, especially in discussions with partners and close friends. You'll be tempted to say something out of pleasure somewhere.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be cautious about what you can achieve at work today. Is your supervisor to please others, you might agree to unreasonable deadlines. Better to yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Financial speculation is appealing today. Nevertheless, be careful. Arrange weight-bulk better than they are. However, this a good day for business and commerce. Enjoy the time!

BIKO MACHINE BY MANS ABRERA

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dan Feng

4								5
	7			3			8	
			1	7	4			
		5				9		
	6	4		9		7	3	
		8				6		
			7	2	9			
	9			8			6	
1								4

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	9	1	3	8	5	7	4
3	7	1	5	9	4	2	6	8
4	5	8	2	6	7	3	1	9
8	9	4	6	5	1	7	2	3
2	6	3	7	8	9	1	4	5
5	1	7	3	4	2	8	9	6
1	8	6	9	7	5	4	3	2
9	3	2	4	1	6	6	8	7
7	4	5	8	2	3	9	5	1

So easy-to-bake Japanese . . .

From page D1

home and bear tea ball.

Heat mixture over chocolate. Let sit for 13-15 minutes to allow chocolate to melt. Slowly stir to combine until well blended.

Ingredients:

For 1500 gr bread flour
6 c (1350 gr) white sugar
1 liter (20 oz) powdered milk
1 tsp (5 g) iodized salt
1 tbsp fresh yeast
1 ½ c (350 g) water
6 c (150 g) shortening/butter
½ c chocolate spread or 50 mg/ groundnut
1 c (200 g) chocolate spread or filling
Cookie cutter
Confectionery sugar for garnishing

For suggestions, e-mail the author at ebuga@inquirer.com.ph

6 FLATTEN chocolate dough and spread 2 tbsp of chocolate spread/ganache.

7 SEAL dough with chocolate filling. Set aside.

8 HEAVYSILE, put 1 tbsp of cookie crust into round molder (like a cookie cutter). Flatten with spoon until inside surface of round molder is fully covered.

9 PLACE chocolate dough with chocolate filling at the center of flattened cookie crust.

12 SPRINKLE with confectionery sugar

10 PROOF the chocolate bread in proof box or corner it with a sheet of plastic wrap and set aside in room temperature, until double in size.

11 BAKE chocolate bread for 11 to 13 minutes. Turn wrap upside down (cookie crust on top). Let it cool for 5 minutes before removing from molder.

Pizza Hut's Viva Lasagna Pizza Got Meatier!

Good news to all Pizza Hut lovers!

The popular and sought-after Pizza Hut creation, the Viva Lasagna Pizza has a new variant - the Viva Meat Lovers Lasagna Pizza. It's got four times more meat, as pizza meat-lovers will enjoy more servings of salami, bacon, pepperoni, and beef in special lasagna sauce.

The Viva Meat Lovers Lasagna Pizza features dough that is soft and not too thick nor too thin. It is topped with fresh lasagna noodles cornbined and packed with thick layer of beef and savory meat sauce. It offers balanced sweetness and salty flavor with the right tanginess from premium tomato sauce.

The new variant is also loaded with various kinds of cheese like mozzarella, cheddar and parmesan, ensuring more cheesy taste and goodness in every bite.

Described as a product that offers the "Best of Both Worlds," Pizza Hut's Viva Lasagna Pizza is a breakthrough product that has been winning the hearts of diners not only here in the Philippines but also in parts of Asia.

The new Viva Lasagna Pizza is a Filipino-initiated product and is set to take on international markets like Singapore and Taiwan.

According to Edgar Allen Capes, brand promo marketing manager of Pizza Hut, since the Viva Lasagna Pizza was introduced it has already become one of the most popular Pizza Hut pizza, following their world famous Pan Pizza.

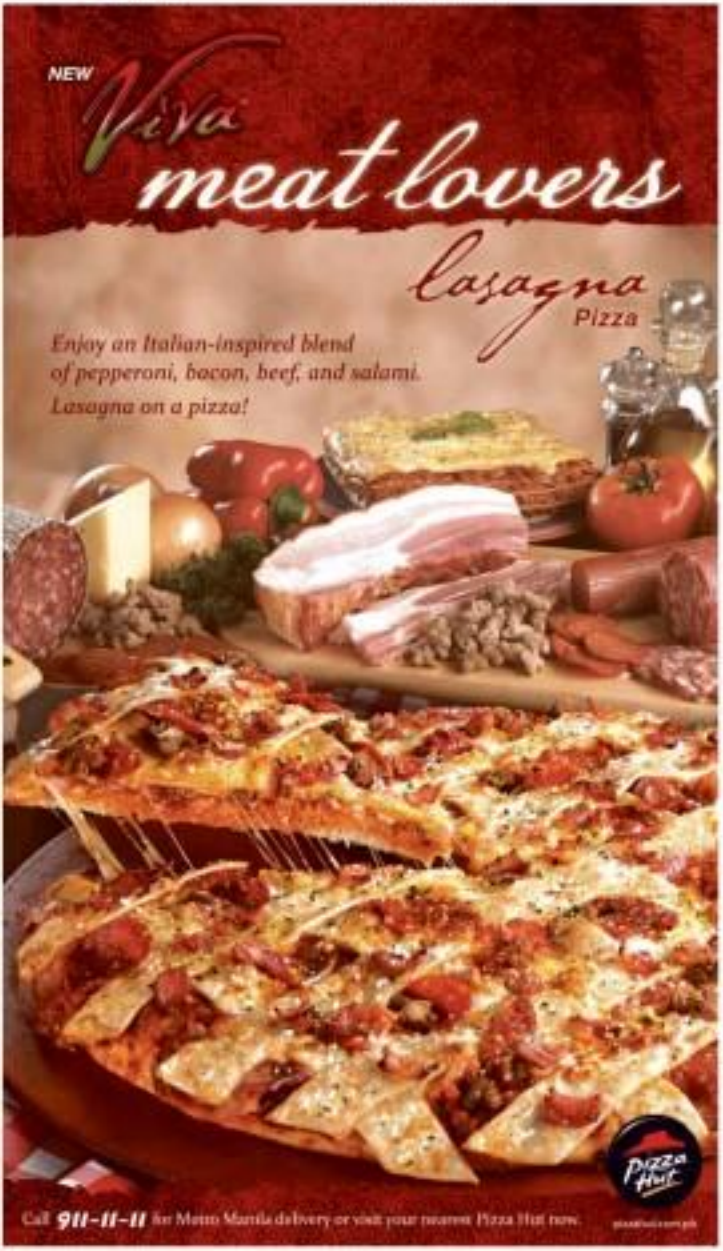
"The Viva Lasagna is definitely a good value for money. In one product, customers can already enjoy two great tasting favorites," said Capes.

Viva Lasagna Meat Lovers Pizza is priced at only P318 for the 10-inch pizza and P589 for the 14-inch pizza.

In the Philippines, Pizza Hut was established in 1986. With 151 stores, it is now the country's most popular pizza chain serving Metro Manila and key cities in Visayas and Mindanao with its dine-in restaurants, bistro and delivery units.

What are you waiting for? Grab a bite of Pizza Hut's Viva Lasagna Meat Lovers Lasagna Pizza today.

Viva Meatlovers Lasagna Feast includes: Medium Viva Meatlovers Lasagna Pizza, 1 order of Sausage Rolls, 1 order of Baked Cinnamon Sticks and 1 Liter Pepsi for only P499.



Field Goal pizza

Sportsnation Café (tel. 7961133 or 37) features Field Goal pizza, a pepperoni treat with onions, olives and tomatoes. Sportsnation Café is located at Fuente Circle, Fuentewood City.

Foie gras breakfast

Heaven 'N Eggs (tel. 8182702) offers breakfast items like Yuan Aubrey's French Toast and Foie Gras Breakfast, Mitch Jaygan's Chicken and Biscuits, Jack Blanco's Huevos Rancheros, Hendrix Hot Links Omelet, Lukas' Lechon Longganisa, Manila Spaghetti at 20 Kings' Tapa For Cooking Home Special and Tuna and Pepper Pork Ribs. Heaven 'N Eggs is located in G/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Healthy meals

The SM Spaghetti House has extended time per-game-and four zoom game meals for the Far Eastern University Tamaraws. The choices are Grilled Chicken Breast with Roasted Garlic Spaghetti, Spaghetti Tomato Ragu and Singaporean Tom Yum Chicken Spaghetti.

DINING OUT

Poached fish with wine

Wet Sage Hotel Manila's Riviera Café (tel. 8548555) presents Cool Meets Wood for lunch/dinner buffet on Aug. 7–16. Featured dishes are Poached Fish with White Wine Sauce, Osso Bucco Bromedale, Roast Leg of Lamb with Mint Jus, Baked Salmon Filled with Spinach Mousse in Blanche, Roast Lamb Leg, Hainanese Chicken Rice, Shoyu Ikan, Nasi Lemak, Mee Goreng, Chili Crab, Bak Kut Teh, dimsumm, Bola-bola Siopao, Nai Kare, Roast Duck, Suckling Pig, Beef Rendang, Prawn Sambal with Tomato and Pineapple, Crabmeat and Avocado with Mustard Mayonnaise, Beef Salad, Tom Yam Soup, Braised Ox Tongue with Mushroom and Escabeche.

Winter mushroom in beef

Genaki (tel. 8180789/ 4186369/ 5297723) features a fusion buffet festival. Delicacies include garlic quail egg/fried rice, seafood balls and meatballs with veg stubbs, giant squid and fish fillet with creamy egg sauce, cooked seafood rolled in egg wrapper, winter mushroom–millenior beef, boiled chicken and oyster mushroom and cashi'an delicacies. All these are available in Genaki branches: SM Megamall, Glorietta 3, EDSA, Padre Faura and West Ave.

Range Rattlers Chicken

Texas Roadhouse Grill (tel. 6356715 to 16) offers Wild West Lunch at P206 per pax. The promo profiters Loaded Meat Loaf, Range Rattlers Chicken, Flemenan Crusted Fish Grill, Wrangler's Pork Steak available at El Pueblo, Ortigas Center.

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Delicious 'callos'

Ginoo's Grill and Restaurant (139 LP Leviste St., Salcedo Vill., Makati) offers classic Filipino, Spanish and American cuisine. Dishes include callos, cheeseburger and grilled babyback ribs.

Green chili muffin

Seven Corners Restaurant at Greenhills Plaza, Cubao, Manila (tel. 8351202) features Tex-Mex cuisine until July 31. Featured are jalapeño cream soup, Jamicalito soup, jalapeño and Tex-Mex chicken salad, cheese cheese soup, cheddar-chili bread basket, jalapeño garlic bread, green chili muffin, marinated pork with yellow pepper sauce, grilled salmon with green chili sauce and red snapper with green chili.

Mixed seafood in soup

Sushi Train Manila's Kanpyong Hoya Tea Restaurant (tel. 8823333) features Oyster Seafood Special a la carte dishes until July 31. Dishes include Baby Duet (mixed seafood in hot and sour soup), Pla Lapu-Lapu Sinigkhwang (steam style-duet with fresh and sauce) and Yam Som Tab (three kinds of spicy seafood with roast rice powder and lime juice).

Tutti Frutti yogurt

Tutti Frutti, a US-based specialty frozen yogurt café chain with 81 stores worldwide, opens its first Philippine store on Aug. 8 at the Atrium, SM Megamall. Frozen yogurt is a great source of calcium and protein. It contains live and active cultures that aid in digestion.

Smoked 'bangus sinaga'

UCC Bistro Café offers the Smoked Bangus Tinapa Breakfast Meal, Sorsigak Island and Bangus Rice Combination. It also offers Kilimpapaya coffee, waffles and sausages and mango juice. UCC Cafés are located at SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City; The Block, SM City, Dasmariñas; Camalig Hills, Quezon City; Powerplant, Makati City; SM Pampanga, Pampanga City; Greenbelt 5, Makati City; Powerplant, Makati City; Robinsons Midtown, Manila; S Maison, Quezon City; Glorietta Park, Makati; and The Terraces, Ayala Center Cebu, Cebu City.

JOHNNY ROCKETS TO SET UP SHOP ON PHILIPPINE SHORES THROUGH ACA GROUP OF COMPANIES

US restaurant franchise chooses partnership with ACA Group of Companies as it looks to the Philippines for growth.

International restaurant chain Johnny Rockets signed a partnership agreement allowing the country's leader in franchising, the ACA Group of Companies, to help assess and bring their signature American food and entertainment to Manila. At the contract signing last December 17 at the Johnny Rockets corporate headquarters in Lake Forest, California were ACA Group of Companies CEO and President Dr. Amable "Migguel" C. Aguilar and Johnny Rockets CEO -President Lee Sanders.

Johnny Rockets is an American restaurant franchise specializing in juicy grilled-to-order hamburgers, freshly made sandwiches, hand-dipped shakes & malts and freshly baked apple pie. Their restaurants evoke a wholesome 1950s American diner atmosphere that appeal to families and anyone nostalgic for All-American fare. The Johnny Rockets experience is completed by tableside jukeboxes in each booth, friendly servers that sing and dance every half-hour, twirl straws and make smiley faces of ketchup.

The ACA Group of Companies is a 100% Filipino-owned and managed company that specializes in building homegrown businesses and finding viable business opportunities for local entrepreneurs. Its successful business concepts include Ok For Less, Asia's market leader and largest professional ink refilling station.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto D. Velarde

'Antig' is Busan

CHEER FACTOR

HERO Angelo and Erich Quiwaan in one of four special features.

Paper clip inspired long-running series

By Harold R. Cruz

CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO was a woman of extraordinary strength in the ailing Intel President Corazon Aquino. "She's someone I look up to and idolize," said Concio. "Having gone through a lot, she knows the true meaning of suffering."

In a gathering on Tuesday, entertainment writers sought the reaction of Concio, ABS-CBN president and chief operating officer, in the news of Aquino's deteriorating health. Mrs. Aquino was diagnosed with colon cancer in March 2008.

"I also admire her for being a highly spiritual person," the network official added. "She has great compassion; she's such an inspiration."

Concio said the lives of people who suffer but rise against the odds make up the stuff that have been featured in "Maalaala Mo Kaya (MMK)," the TV show she has hosted for 10 years. "These stories make us reflect and reshape our own weaknesses. They give us the courage to face our fears, make us feel grateful for what we have," she pointed out.

She recalled that "MMK," the longest-running drama anthology on local television today, started with an idea and a paperclip. "My bosses challenged me to come up with a good TV show," she recounted. "It's an impromptu story park. I grabbed a paperclip on one of the office desks and said, 'This paperclip may be ordinary to us but it could mean a whole lot to some[one]

(MORE)

How Tonyboy sees Gretchen now

By Dayani San Diego Jr.

THE QUESTION STUMPS TONYBOY COJUANGCO, chair of Cinemalaya Foundation.

Will his partner Gretchen Barretto ever act in an indie movie?

After all, contemporary (and perceived even) in the beauty department) Diana Zubiri is reportedly starring in an indie movie in her production (Ang Manda and directed by Bobby Garcia.

"I don't know," Cojuangco says. "I don't want to force her to do anything."

Barretto attended the Cinemalaya (the annual Philippine Independent Film Festival) awards night last year, Cojuangco recalls. "She's open [to the idea], but she's also waiting on her singing exam. She hasn't really thought about acting from days."

An indie movie for Barretto isn't farfetched because one of the main proponents of the digital festival, filmmaker Laurice Guillen and producer Bobbie Bonifacio Films.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Yes, are her mentors, having worked with them in her old movies for Seiko Films.

"She's very close to Laurice and Bobbie," Cojuangco agrees. "But she likes different types of movies. We have different tastes in movies. But that doesn't mean that what I like is better than what she likes."

For much the same consideration, he explains, Cinemalaya endeavors to present a

(MORE)

CINEMALAYA founders Tonyboy Cojuangco with partner Gretchen Barretto.

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IT'S ONE OF THOSE RARE TIMES I LOVE ADVENTURELAND.

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TOWN

AYALA CENTER CEBU

MARKET! MARKET!

3

Tutuban

Rom com runs short of novelty

LOS ANGELES—ALL THE ROMANTIC comedy conventions are shamelessly on parade in "The Proposal," trampling on our brains.

They include an uptight character who literally lets her hair down to show she's loosening up; a sing-along, wacky relatives, a shocking mid-wedding revelation, a road dash to the airport and, finally, some very public kiss-your.

Where is the originality, people? This is a predictable genre—a guy and a girl clearly meant for each other end up together, despite the cracking obstacles that come their way. We know the destination before we even park the car at the multiplex.

"The Proposal" seemed to be going there, led by rom-com stars with solid comic chops: Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds are both suited for snappy banter and they play off each other with some nice friction. Bullock has always shown a flair for physical humor, but here she gets a chance to play a tyrannical New York book editor, a refreshing change.

Her boss Fletcher (take a deep breath "D'Onofrio") and assistant/lover Peter (Reynolds' oblivious any goodwill they'd generated when "The Proposal" piles on the convenience and goes precipitously downstairs in the final act.

Bullock is Margaret Tate, a tight Canadian on the verge of being deported. She blackmails her put-upon assistant, aspiring editor Andrew Paxton (Reynolds), into marrying her to stay in the country. Think they'll be fooling her family in three days? Perhaps in Sitka, Alaska, anything is possible.

Stranded

That's where Andrew drags Margaret to meet his family to convince a prominent immigration official that they're a real couple. Some typical hijinks ensue as Andrew's parents (Margaret Gunsalus the local realtor with hermic tics her bachelorette party Andrew's mom (Mary Steenburgen), granddaughter (Betty White) and other family friends drag her to a bar for a little entertainment from a male stripper (Oscar Nuñez, who has multiple functions on the island, none of which is terribly encouraging).

White gets repeatedly smooched with awkward gags. She's more than capable of raunchy humor, as endearing moment with her prim looks; here, she's merely asked to look silly.

Not we know those filthy frills will come down; Margaret's defenses, and in no time she lets down her uptight ponytail and realizes maybe there's more to Andrew. (Reynolds' personality is charmed, leering him naked probably also helped—it sure doesn't hurt—in a scene in which both actors strip down to basically nothing. They're both born to the gym, it seems.

As bickering screenlovers, they're a great fit. As potential romantic partners, not so much—and the 32-year age difference is only part of what makes their connection seem implausible.

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH!

NOW SHOWING

"A SPELLBINDING THRILLER"

Kate BECKINSALE

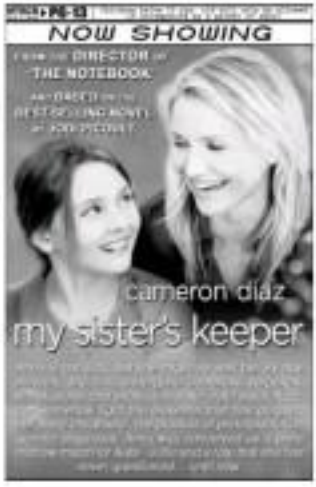
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

NOW SHOWING

JOHNNY DEPP CHRISTIAN BALE MARION COTILLARD

PUBLIC ENEMIES

NOW SHOWING



cameron diaz

my sister's keeper

Paper clip...

From page E1

someone else. I suggest that we ask viewers to tell their stories about the most celebrated objects."

The first episode, Cruz's recalled, was titled "Rubber Shoes." It starred Robert Arevalo as a street vendor who struggles to send his son, played by Bernardo Serrano, to school. "All the sons wanted me to have a new pair of rubber shoes," Cruz said. "My lenses liked the story and gave me my first break on prime-time TV."

Eighteen years later, she said, "Mukh" continues to touch the hearts of Filipino viewers worldwide. Next month, it celebrates its anniversary with five special episodes.

- For the first installment (Aug. 1), Ai Ai delas Alas and Iriish Gonzales play mother and daughter who both work in domestic helpers to raise a family of six. Noel L. Vitug directs.
- The travails of any war veterans living in the United States will be told in the Aug. 8 episode, "Kumuha Nang Tatlong Asawa," starring Joel as well as US-based Filipino actors Joji Isla. Program Luna, Lourdes Alberone and Lucita Soriano. Dodo Lumahan directs.
- On Aug. 15, Ryan Eigenmann and Giselle Toengi play a young migrant couple who experience hardships as they live a new life abroad. The episode is tagged by John D'Lazarde.
- Princess Punzalan returns on TV on Aug. 22 to portray a woman trapped in an ordinary marriage. The episode, again by Lacuesta, also stars Michael de Mesa and Miguel Vera.
- Glen Adapi plays Grace, a caregiver working in the United States who befriends Milly, an American. They learn about strength and the essence of family from each other. The episode, to air on Aug. 29, also features young actress Lauren Young as Gina's daughter.

"MMK," airs Saturdays at 8 p.m. and has tied up with The Filipino Channel (TFC), ABS-CBN's international broadcasting arm, to garner more inspiring stories of Pinoys in the US, Italy, Japan and Canada.

CAST members Meryl Streep and Amy Adams at the premiere of "Julie and Julia" in LA on Monday. AP

How Tonyboy sees Gretchen now

To see page E2

"variety" of films every year. "We want the filmmakers to express their individuality."

Cojuangco, who watched almost all the movies at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) last week, picks the eventual top winners in his personal favorites this year. Joel Trinidad Reblando's "Colossus," Mike Sandejas' "Ding Sana Kita" and Veronica Velasco and Jinky Laurel's "Last Supper No. 3."

"This year, all the films are equally good. Not one film has a clear advantage over the others," he points out. "Instead of viewing screeners at home, I prefer watching at the CCP so that I can see and hear for myself the audience's reaction."

The end of the tenure of Bro. Jardin as CCP president will not have an effect on Cinemalaya's future, says Cojuangco.

Supporting Cinemalaya

"We're hoping that the next CCP president will allow us to continue staging the festival at the CCP," he adds. "In any case, we're confident that the CCP board will continue supporting Cinemalaya because it has been successful for the past five years."

If things don't go as planned, Cojuangco says Cinemalaya is ready to "look for another venue."

Needless to say, Jardin will continue his roles as festival director and president of the Cinemalaya Foundation. "That's precisely why we put up a foundation, to ensure the festival's continuity," Cojuangco says.

Distribution

The Cinemalaya films will be shown on TV 5 after the 90-day grace period, he announces (Cojuangco is president of ABC 5.) "But we'll allow them to show their films in theaters first. We'll air them on Sensas Satellite as well. I have another concept for distributing the movies, but I'm keeping it under wraps for now."

Is there a chance of upping the cool grant of P500,000?

"We'll see," he replies. "First, we want to increase the number of categories. This year, we had the Kidapawan prize. Next year, we will allow veteran commercial directors to join the competition."

E-mail: bgcojuangco@hotmail.com

COJUANGCO (R) and Laurice Guillen (beside him) with some of the year's winners.

Rushes Special

Celebrity auction

NEW YORK—ROCK legend Jerry Weinstein's first recording contract worth $1 and rock's sucks and stolen papers sent by Madonna to her old bodyguard were on sale in an online auction on Monday.

Other artists and prominent figures featured among the items in the 48 items offered in the week's sale and pop art auction on www.gavelnet.com.tododavid.com include John Lennon, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, the Rolling Stones and Eminem.

The auction will run through Aug. 5.

Music tie-up

NEW YORK—The major music labels are planning a new digital album format that will debut with a tablet-like personal computer from Apple Inc. in September, people familiar with the plans said on Monday.

The labels are attempting to revive the multi-track album format with software that packages songs, traditional album liner notes, music videos, and other interactive extras as part of a premium-priced package.

'Iron Man 2'

SAN DIEGO—Filming for "Iron Man 2" finished last last week but thousands of fans got their first sneak peek at the star-studded new cast members this weekend at the Comic-Con convention.

Ten months before "Iron Man 2" hits movie theaters in May 2010, fans saw Robert Downey Jr.'s industrialist-turned-playboy superhero Tony Stark working alone and considering another suitor in a bar scene with Nick Fury, played by Samuel L. Jackson. Reuters

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GALLERIA

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2 THE PROPOSAL	7 MY SISTER'S KEEPER / PUBLIC ENEMIES
3 ORPHAN	8 Indistinct: TARIKSAN / MEDALYA
4 NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH	9 TRANSFORMERS 2 / ICE AGE 3
5 OMG: OH MY GIRL	10 LIZARDMAN

ERMITA

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2 THE PROPOSAL	5 OMG: OH MY GIRL
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	7 MY SISTER'S KEEPER / ICE AGE 3

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3 THE PROPOSAL	7 LIZARDMAN
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NOVALICHES | PIONEER

1 OMG: OH MY GIRL	1 HARRY POTTER 6 / MORNING AFTER THE PARTY
2 HARRY POTTER 6	2 OMG: OH MY GIRL
3 THE PROPOSAL	3 THE PROPOSAL
4 ORPHAN	4 ORPHAN

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Robinsons Movieworld Galleria
(Cinema 1,2&3)

STA. ROSA | LIPA

1 OMG: OH MY GIRL	1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 HARRY POTTER 6	2 OMG: OH MY GIRL
3 THE PROPOSAL	3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 ORPHAN	4 LIZARDMAN

DASMARIÑAS | IMUS

1 HARRY POTTER 6	1 OMG: OH MY GIRL
2 THE PROPOSAL	2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 OMG: OH MY GIRL	3 THE PROPOSAL
4 ORPHAN	4 ORPHAN

STARMILLS

1 HARRY POTTER 6	4 OMG: OH MY GIRL
2 THE PROPOSAL	5 LIZARDMAN
3 TRANSFORMERS 2	6 FROM WITHIN

ANGELES | TAGLOBAN

1 HARRY POTTER 6	1 OMG: OH MY GIRL
2 THE PROPOSAL	2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 OMG: OH MY GIRL	3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 LIZARDMAN	

BACOLOD | ILOILO

1 OMG: OH MY GIRL	1 OMG: OH MY GIRL
2 HARRY POTTER 6	2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 THE PROPOSAL	3 THE PROPOSAL
4 LIZARDMAN	4 LIZARDMAN
5 MOTHER OF TEARS	5 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
6 MEDALYA	6 MEDALYA

IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN A REMOTE MOUNTAIN, SUBSISTENCE FARMER TARIKSAN LIVES WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN IN THE SHADOW OF HIS FATHER'S LEGACY. FEARLESS AND STRONG WITH UNWAVERING, AT TIMES OBSTINATE LOVE FOR HIS FAMILY, TARIKSAN IS A MAN WHO HAS GAINED RESPECT AMONG HIS PEOPLE. LATER, A FAMILY MISFORTUNE DRIVES HIM TO ABANDON HIS FARM AND BECOME A SAMURAI OF SINGGAY. THE ENSUING REPRESENTATION OF FEMINISM IN ART, CULTURE AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD. A KAMAY JUSTICE FILM. DIRECTED BY MARILOU DIAZ-ABAYA.

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IMMERSIVE FEATURED FILM

Acting with the best of them

SOME ACTORS HAVE COME out of their way to express their appreciation for my review notes on their Bicol TV performances. Thanks, but most of the media should go to the actors who caught me a lot when I was performing with them many years ago.

That's right, although people these days associate me with writing and directing, I used to act a lot with the better local actors of the Philippine stage, and picked up valuable pointers that I am now able to pass on to the actors I handle, or by way of my reviews.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

What exactly did I learn from the best dramatic actors in the biz? From Vic Silayan, I got his acute sense of realism. He made everything he did literally real for himself — that's why it happened so naturally and strongly on the audience.

We also knew how to negotiate exhaustion from performance. When he was rehearsing a scene, he would often just mumble his way through it — but the minute the play actually started, he came vividly alive, "exploding" into full involvement and believability. And, woe to the re-actor who couldn't adjust to his changed presence and match it while similarly using concentration.

Matchless

Another stage luminary who had this ability was the late, great Tita Muñoz. At the height of her artistic powers, Tita was matchless. She was a great actress, had a lot of sensitivity and temperament, spoke with an unusually rich and textured voice, and generally bowled audiences over.

On the other hand, her combination of gifts was so awesome that it reduced some of her co-stars to insecure or unfocused nations through no fault of her own.

Like Vic, Tita had great presence, credibility and creativity. While she was vulnerable to highly disciplined performers, she could easily adapt to improvise, to go for the jugular, so to speak, and her emotions would flare up accurately, so that great acting moments were memorably achieved.

In the field of comedy, my memories are of Aurelio Tolentino and Tiboy (Conrado) Arnaiz. Bob was better known as one of the country's leading baritones, but his comedic characterizations were equally classic. In person, he was sophisticated and quite reserved. On the stage, however, he was attracted to country-hospitable roles — but he managed the unexpected character shift with great ease and hearty humor.

For her part, Bibot could do drama as well as comedy, but she most loved to underscore the unexpectedly funny side of life and people, whom her archival style was put to great use.

The play that summed up her exceptional gift for both drama and comedy was "Modern Courage," where I played her younger son. So many tragic things happened to her character in the course of the play's drama, but her Modern Courage was so indomitable that she still managed to see the humming and even ironically ridiculous side of existence.

It was this comic-dramatic fusion that drew me to Bibot's dichotomly textured performances.

In another production, we indulged in unconventional casting and portrayed our mother and son, but lines — and we even played a key scene over in our underwear! That was when I learned from Bibot that an actor must always be eager to surprise and delight his audience ... and how!

We, Tita, Bob and Bibot — four of my most memorable mentors. Thanks to them and other actors who have helped my appreciation for what actors can really do, if they have the heart, love and experience that make for genuine excellence in the art of acting.

'Rosario at Laura'

Carolinian Theater opens its 22nd season with "Rosario at Laura," with Miguel Moreno and Jhen Oliver playing the title roles under Irene Tapanio's direction.

Performances are on Aug. 1 at Ritzi Mall's Open-Air Auditorium, Aug. 7-15 at the 409 Theater, and Aug. 21-23 at Gil Southwell, Lee Pilos. Call 899.2720.

Other cast members include Orris Rambo, Jose Jefferey Gutierrez, Richard Manalo, Alfred Otero and Abner Bellosillo Jr.

Presley tribute night at Merk's Bar Aug. 15

THE ELVIS PRESLEY FRIENDship Club Philippines International commemorates the 32nd death anniversary of the King of Rock 'n' Roll with a tribute show on Aug. 15 at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3, Makati, featuring Chino Sweed (EPFC founding chair and the first Elvis Presley of the Philippines), Eric Navarro, Honest Mendoza, Nora Aunor, Douglas Manuel, Alex Torres, Jimmy Constantino and Jun Pereña, with the Elvis Presley Band and Elvis Girl Dancers. Dinner is at 7 p.m., show time is at 9.

SHOW TIME

Regine V at Skydome

Regine Velasquez starts a two-night concert series on Aug. 1 and 8 at the Skydome, SM North Edsa. The same venue is being targeted by Sarah Geronimo in Enero for a number of gigs in the coming months. Other shows lined up will feature Tom Jones and Smash Hardee (Aug. 7), Basil Valdez and Joey Albert (Aug. 21), among others. Call 911-5555.

Tonight

- Johnny and Edsoy at 70s Bistro. Call 434-2507.
- Acoustic Jams: Enrique de Dios; Theater Thursday: "Somar The Musicalite," at May-Nel Restaurant, QC.
- Fatinhood, Layag, Johnny Alegre, Kimmie Dane, and Helen at Hottstyle, 5622 Gole St., San Antonio Village, Makati City. Call 897-6829.

Tomorrow

The Jerks at 70s Bistro.

Acoustic hour: Neil Arellis at May-Nel Restaurant, QC.

Aug. 1

Nino Inch Nails at the Araneta Coliseum. Call 911-3555.

Aug. 9

2009 Model Id Champions Philippine Finals, 8 p.m., Stagecraft Trading, Edsa cor. Balintawak St. Mandaluyong City.

Aug. 11

- Lady Gaga at the Araneta Coliseum.
- Edvah Ledesma, Regine Tolentino, Anna Marie Perlyer in "Ballroom Superstar 3, in Rock Session" at the Music Museum, Greenhills. Call 274-7798, 891-3881; 0917-6282477.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. The King (sculpture likeness, standing fifth from L) would turn a blue-suede-shoe over Chino Barrio's fourth from L) and other Elvis tribute artists.

Aug. 12-15

"Under an Penn Sky," a romantic tale the journey of the town of Dolor at the Baler Sports Complex, Aurora province. Call 527-3529.

Ogie is ex-wife Michelle's ...

That's important because Mich will be a second father to Ogie and Michelle's daughters Leila and Sarah, he added.

Even Regine is at ease with Michelle and Mich, so much so that she will sing at the wedding as well.

She's eyeing her current ranking, "And I Love You So" for the couple. "That's my song for Ogie, but I'll ask Michelle what's her favorite as well," she said.

He's really a professional wedding singer, Ogie confessed. "That was my job when I was younger."

Wedding staples

Ogie's biggest hits as singer and composer have actually become staples in weddings.

His latest CD is bound to be a bridal favorite as well. "I am doing a tribute album to [late composer] George Canseco under Universal."

His other CD is a fun compilation of songs for his teen flick, "Spoiled Brat: Angelina and Yoyo," with Michael V. due in September.

For "OMG," he wrote the love theme, "Walang Iba," incorporated by Regine.

Regine told the inquirer that she's also a perennial wedding singer in real life. "When I was young, my dad [Gary Valenciano] would invite early morning weddings, at 6 a.m. just to attend me! That was part of my training."

Last time the two sang in an early-morning wedding was when "OMG" co-star Judy Ann Santos tied the knot with Ryan Agoncillo in Batangas last April.

As for singing in their own wedding?

Both chose to keep mum.

"We can't talk about it now. We have to wait for things to be settled first," Regine said. "Then I wouldn't want to work on my wedding day."

"We'll talk about it if we can do so on," Ogie explained.

But they can dream, can't they?

The two plan to work in a movie after Regine's reunion with Aga Muhlach. They're all set to host the third season of GMA-7's "Celebrity Duets" next month (August).

E-mail: inquirerandlife@inquirer.com.ph

Ogie is ex-wife Michelle's 'happy' wedding singer

By Reyan Ilan Diego Jr

THEY'VE PROVEN IT'S POSSIBLE to remain friends after divorce.

Even though singer-actor Ogie Alcasid is separated from ex-wife, former Miss Australia Michelle van Eimeren, they've remained cordial.

So much so that Ogie and pre-teen girlfriend Regine Velasquez will grace the upcoming wedding of Michelle to fiancé Mark Morrow in Australia in November.

In deference to the couple, Ogie isn't keen to divulge details. "It's a very private affair," he said.

But on the set of his latest movie "OMG: Oh My God," Ogie told Inquirer Entertainment that he will serve as groomsmen for Mark.

They're cool about the set-up, he assured.

"I'm very, very happy for both Michelle and Mark," Ogie said. "I'm glad that Michelle has found a good person ..."

OGIE II

"I'm glad she has found a good person," says Ogie Alcasid of the mother of his two daughters.

Making things go right

THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, I'VE JUMPED at just about every kind of event. Emcee it, I've done it: fiestas, birthday parties, anniversaries, school events (for all grade levels), including pre-school and college), I've sung in political campaigns, charity fund-raisers and during visits to foreign heads of state. I've been accompanied on piano, and by whole bands and symphony orchestras; I've used backing tracks, too. Well, it's been interesting, and I've seen many different performances feel like mine.

A lot of these events can be (and have been) complicated from the moment of preparation to the point of execution. Items levels rise to unreasonable levels, such that not even huffing to breathe can help. At the end of the day, the events go just as well as they can go, and of course some events go better than others.

Of late, I have been thrilled to perform at some very-friendly sponsored shindigs, and I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities. At one, I got to work with several of the best in the business; at another, with relative newbies eager to learn and quick to please. I've also had you to remain blissfully ignorant of the proverbial gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair—whose my mother's clutching and comforting self strives to make me more angry. That doesn't happen very often; I'm almost always in total accountable.

Laundry list

Here's my laundry list to make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible:

1) Get study materials early, allowing enough time to actually study them. I pride myself on being a quick study, learning full songs in 30 minutes or so (I've had to practice). An artiste who have rather hooked out of the theory, or value it, (It's a skill that comes in very handy from time to time. Still, I do like having my song list, a cache of lyrics, and MD's sent either by CD or e-mail a good week in advance (three to four days is fine, but that's pushing it). I have very busy days now—taking my daughter to school, going to the gym, training actors on—and just living life. I use whatever little time I have to listen to song and attempt to memorize lyrics (even when there is a prompter, I like something my music to memorize). I like to practice when it's two days to a show, and nothing has thrown up in my e-mail to tell me what I'm supposed to do.

2) Rehearse ... rehearse ... and rehearse. Sounds simple, but it makes a world of difference. I feel very comfortable in performance when I've fully rehearsed. It's helpful to take the time to ding the songs, figure out how to technically place them, time the transitions of the chips, learn the choreography. It's great to do sound checks, to make sure the musicians are exactly how you want them, and then another a final dress rehearsal to see how your genius fare with the lighting and the sets. I've seen past TV appearances of myself with that "shot in bass/lights" look, and promised to never put myself—or an audience—through that again. Call it performance trauma. I'm still haunted.

BACK STORY

Lee Salvoza

3) Create a comfortable work atmosphere—not your's, just more productive in that environment. Here, that is a little subjective, in "comfortable" could mean different things to different performers. It could mean a bit lunch in a Styrofoam container or a piping hot pizza, a cozy chair or couch to the waiting room or dressing room, a spring, breezy, non-slippery floor (no shoring), good outdoor lighting, less-flowing coffee and tea, lots of drinking water ... and good people. Actually, the last one is the most important. Many would go without a lot, but would absolutely love (or need) that co-workers.

That's it. Seems like a pretty short list, but definitely essential. Hell, to make my event go smoothly from a performer's point of view (hint, there's a margin of error that I need to consider on the day of the show but if I feel completely prepared and happy, I can, and will, do my job well.

Shameless plug

Ambient Media proudly presents "Quick Change," a concert headlined by incredible quick-change (cool) humorically versatile) artists, musical group The Company and comedy genius Joe Santos. Joining them are promising new actors Raymond Saner and Jet Sarkodie.

"Quick Change" is directed by Maestro Lucchesi-Vela. Choir choreographer and Shannon Aquino. Musical direction is by Rio Dizon. Playing the music will be members of Hi-Lites studio. That will be tomorrow and Aug. 1 at the Theater, CCP Complex, and Aug. 7 and 8 at Music Hub, Plaza Road, Cebu.

For tickets, call Ticketworld (891-9999), Sea Theater (312-5001) or the Music Hub (+63 32 255-1111). Or get your tickets online at www.ticketworld.com.ph.

Better a week late than never ...

To my father, HRH Don Feliciano G. Salonga, a very happy birthday! Turning 80 never looked so good!

Stop losing your hair. Regain your confidence!

For most women losing hair is like losing vibrancy, self-confidence and self-esteem. And this could lead to depression, anxiety and feelings of inferiority. Stop losing your hair. If there are women like Interior Designer Venus Potato Valdez and Designer Eva Antonino who fought and triumphed against hairloss – you can, too. Discover their secret.

Excessive stress, gones or too much extreme styling methods could cause women's hairloss. So stop falling and thinning, one needs the right treatments. In the Philippines, there's only one hairloss centre where advanced treatments and highly trained technologies are found: **Svenson.**

Venus fought thinning hair as soon as she experienced its early signs. "Thinning hair makes a woman look older. I didn't want that to happen to me. When I noticed lots of hair on my pillow and my

Venus Potato Valdez

hair started to thin out, I immediately bought 'thickening' shampoos. But I was disappointed. They didn't stop my problem. Good thing I discovered Svenson. After a session of treatments, my hair regained its original volume. It's even softer, more lustrous. I could style it any way I want it!"

Eva Antonino

Eva, on the other hand, wanted hair results for her hair. "I didn't want to use other products. I just wanted the best. When a friend recommended Svenson, I decided to give it a try. I had no more falling hair. It's back to its lush, dense, shining look. I knew I made the right decision. Thanks to Svenson!"

Stop falling and thinning hair. Call Svenson at **892-HAIR (4247)** or **234-8893(Cebu)** today for a FREE consultation. You can be assured that all consultations are carried out in private.

Beat rainy-day blues with Jollibee s Big Bowl soups

Full-size comfort comes just in time for the rainy season as Jollibee presents big-ger versions of its soothing soup offerings like La Paz Batchoy Style Soup Big Bowl and the Creamy Macaroni Soup Big Bowl.

The only P68, you can now enjoy a big-ger serving of the tasty roast-based broth, sautéed pork, fresh vegetable toppings, egg with crunchy garlic and chicharon bits of the La Paz Batchoy soup, or savor the hearty chicken, macaroni noodles with chunky corn, carrot, ham and chicken bits of the Creamy Macaroni Soup.

Just add P10 and you can get a regular sulfurin to better enjoy the taste of home-cooked soup goodness in every order.

With dishes like serving, each bowl makes a filling snack or a meal in itself. Jollibee's Big Bowl soups also make a flavorful sakana complement to your favorite rice and viand meals at Jollibee.

So grab and delight as you savor the taste of home-cooked soup goodness with your Jollibee Big Bowl soup servants.

Extra enjoyment with Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries and dips

Don't you just wish your favorite Jolly Crispy Fries came in bigger sizes and with more delicious dips, for more enjoy-sharing with your barkada?

Consider your wish granted as Jollibee has taken its best-selling Fries to an unprecedented experience with the new Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries. It has also recently introduced two new exciting and flavorful dips – the Cheesy Cheese and Cheesy Tomato – to complement your favorite seafood and chicken fries.

The rich and creamy Cheesy Cheese dip is a melt-in-your-mouth match with your Jolly Crispy Fries, while the tangy tomato and herb flavor of the Cheesy Tomato dip adds thrill and excitement to your favorite fries.

The Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries will surely be a hit while hanging out and having a good time with friends. Whether you're catching up with one another after the long summer break or hosting a weekend DvD marathon, the fun never stops with such tasty, affordable snacks on hand.

Get your Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries for only P59. By adding just P29, you can also upgrade your burger value meal regular fries to the Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries.

Meanwhile, you can enjoy any of the two new and exciting dips with your regular fries and a regular softdrink for only P49. You can also opt to get the mega fries with a Cheesy Cheese or Cheesy Tomato dip plus a regular softdrink for only P63. And for that extreme fries enjoyment, go for the Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries with both flavored dips and a regular softdrink for only P69. The Cheesy Cheese and Cheese dip can also be enjoyed at P10 each.

So whether you want to satisfy your own craving or to share your favorite snacks with friends, head to a Jollibee store near you and start having loads of fun with the Extra Large Jolly Crispy Fries and Dips today!